LITTLE

AM
1928
lit
c.2

BOSTON UNIVERSITY CHENERY LIBRARY

Regulations for the Use of Manuscript Theses

Unpublished theses submitted for the Master's and Doctor's degrees and deposited in the Boston University Chenery Library are open for inspection, but are to be used only with due regard to the rights of the authors. Bibliographical references may be noted, but passages may be copied only with the permission of the author, and proper credit must be given in subsequent written or published work. Extensive copying or publication of the thesis in whole or in part requires also the consent of the Dean of the Graduate School of Boston University.

This thesis by ..... has been used by the following persons, whose signatures attest their acceptance of the above restrictions.

A library which borrows this thesis for use by its patrons is expected to secure the signature of each user.

NAME and ADDRESS of USER	BORROWING LIBRARY	DATE

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

THE RUSSIAN SHORT STORY

Submitted by

Mildred Lucile Little

(A.B., West Virginia Wesleyan, 1924)

In partial fulfillment of requirements for

degree of Master of Arts

1928

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
LIBRARY

upstairs
378.744
BO
AM 1928
lit
copy 2

A STUDY OF THE RUSSIAN SHORT STORY

WITH SOME CONSIDERATION OF THE HISTORICAL FACTORS

WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO ITS DEVELOPMENT

July 1929

37516

A STUDY OF THE RUSSIAN SHORT STORY

WITH SOME CONSIDERATION OF THE HISTORICAL FACTORS

WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO ITS DEVELOPMENT

A. The Development of a National Literature.

I Basic influences which moulded the Russian national character.

1. Geography.
2. Race sources.
3. Later race mixtures

II First literary efforts.

1. Songs, or bĕlini.
2. Chronicles.
3. Religious lore.
4. Semi-religious lore.
5. Folk lore.
6. Prose story.

III Historical events effecting literary development; Romantic period.

1. Kiev, a political and intellectual center.
2. Novgorod and the beginnings of history proper.
3. The Tartar invasions.
   a. All literary efforts checked.
4. The Princes of Moscow.
   a. Enslavement of the people.
5. The Moscovite Empire.
   a. Native impulse of expression crushed.

IV The Seventeenth Century and the beginnings of reform.

1. Realization of need of education.
   a. Schools opened by Monks of Kiev.

V The Eighteenth Century and the influence of Western Culture.

1. Peter the Great.
   a. Absolute monarchy.
2. Cultural advances under Catherine II.
   a. Progress in education.
   b. Influence of French models in literature.

VI The beginnings of modern literature in the nineteenth century.

1. Universities founded
2. Reforms of Alexander I.

B. The National Tone in Literature as Expressed Through the Short Story.

I Romanticism and Nationalism.

1. Pushkin.

II The Natural School.

1. Gogol.

III The peculiar office of literature in Russia.

1. Literature as propaganda.

IV The Philosophical Movement.

1. Influence of German philosophy.

V The Intelligentsia; The Youth Movement.

1. Realism and Idealism.
   a. Tolstoy.
2. Classicism.
   a. Turgenev.
3. Mysticism and Naturalism.
   a. Dostoevsky.
4. Humor in fiction
   a. Tchekhov.

VI Criticism in literature.

1. Belinsky.
2. Herzen.

VII Political Movements.

1. Reforms of Alexander II.
   a. Emancipation of serfs, and the problems involved.
   b. Beginnings of revolution.
2. Last effort toward Autocracy, Nationality, and Orthodoxy.
   a. Marxian influence.
      (1) Bakunin.
3. Revolution of 1905.
4. Censorship.
5. Bolshevism, and factors leading to the Revolution of 1917.

VIII The "Moderns" in literature.

1. Realism and revolt.
   a. The Gorki-Andreev School; Kuprin and Artsybashev.
2. Symbolism
   a. Sologub.

C. A Comparison of Russia's Short Story With That of England, France and America.

I Kipling, de Maupassant and Poe.

D. The Influence of Russian Style.

I Technique.

II Human values.

Chevalley, in his "Modern English Novel" calls literature a translation of life. If it is great art that translation will also be the expression and the interpretation of reality. A national literature is "an expression, more or less permanent, of the changing thought and feeling of a people".

In attempting a study of any phase of Russian literature it is necessary to attempt also a certain historic treatment of the development of that literature. "A knowledge of the conditions under which the modern Russian spirit has developed is an indispensable preliminary to a just appreciation of its literature."* Such a study claims special attention because of the "peculiar character" of the literature of Russia, "the high humanity of its content, its naturalness and sincerity, its soaring idealism, the depth and pathos of its effects, and the significance it claims in the mental life of the nation".** "Literature has been in Russia the battle-field where all the battles of progress have been fought. There is in Russia no representative government where political opinions may struggle for recognition; no

* Brückner, A Literary History of Russia, p.2.

**A Literary History of Russia, Brückner, P.1.

public opinion based on tradition and class interest, so literature alone is the medium for advancing social and political ideas. Scientific treatises reach but a few of the nation, so belles-lettres proper have in Russia become the means for inculcating and propagating truths."* "To Englishmen or Frenchmen, Germans or Italians, polite literature is only one form for the expression of National feeling and thought: to the intelligent Russian, without a free press, without the liberty of assembly, without the right to free expression of opinion, literature became the last refuge of his freedom of thought, the only means of propagating higher ideas. He expected and demanded of his country's literature not merely aesthetic recreation; he placed it at the service of everything noble and good, of his aspirations, of the enlightening and emancipation of the spirit."**

Just as it is impossible to understand the theatre of Ireland, or the writings of Yeats, Synge, or Lady Gregory without some knowledge of Irish history and the meaning of Irish Nationalism, so is it impossible to understand the volumes that we call Russian Literature without a knowledge of how that literature is a product of the nation's political and social history.

Yeats, in defining a national literature, has claimed that "it is the work of writers who are moulded by influences

* An Anthology of Russian Literature, Vol.II, Leo Wiener.

**A Literary History of Russia, Bruckner, p.1.

that are moulding their country, and who write out of so deep a life that they are accepted there in the end".

"Hardly any literature equals the Russian in reproducing the spiritual struggles of men, and few Western writers have been as willing as their Russian colleagues to go down to the very bottom of everyday existence and to scrutinize the economic, the social, and the political life of their country. This makes Russian literature a valuable object of study not only as art, but also as the surest road to the understanding of the Russian people and Russian conditions."*

Because Russia is a very old country she gives to her literature, which is new, a serenity and strength that the literature of a new country does not possess. Ten centuries of background, colorful and drab, she offered her literary men.

The Russian federation of states, and the history of the Russian people as a people, go back to the ninth century. There we find inherent qualities and national traits that seek for expression even in the deepest gloom of Russia's later life. For in its early history Russia was not an autocratic empire. The old, original Russia was as colorful as a Bakst setting for the Russian Ballet. The people were gay, noisy, vital, intensely emotional, loving life and living fully.

*Russian Literature, Olgin. P8.

The Russians are a unique people. They have inherited no definite civilization. The "humanistic culture" of the Mediterranean left them untouched. While the Renaissance was moving across Europe, Russia was under the whip of the Tartars. When other nations were stirred by the Reformation, Russia was under the yoke of Orthodoxy. The influences which later moved in upon Russia, largely through the efforts of Peter the Great, moved across the surface of Russian life, changing little, if at all, the fundamental tone of the nation. Later influences, the French Revolution, and even the Great War, changed chiefly the outward appearance of Russia. The great mass of the people remained in thought and principle very much as they had been before the days of Peter the Great. This permanency of character is the result of race mixtures and the conditions governing the Russian's development.

The intensely individual quality of Russian literature, and of Russian music and art as well, can be explained only by a study of the things that went toward the making of the Russian people. The Russian is characterized by a deep, brooding introspection which flares occasionally into a brilliant flame. He dreams, and his dreams are colorful and full of fancy. He is impulsive, capable of great strength and great courage, yet he takes the line of least resistance. When he sings, he often shouts; when he dances, he stamps; when he drinks, he drinks too much.

He is resourceful and cautious, cunning in his evasion of the power of those in authority, yet sullen and hopeless when forced to submit. He is deeply religious, full of superstition and love of the mysteries. He is given to much thought and little speech. He is an idealist and a realist. He is, indeed, an individualist. The Celtic quality of the Slav, the love of beauty and capacity for emotion, is strong in him. In his melancholy we hear again the old Celtic refrain, "They went forth to battle, but they always fell". Yet these Slavs are less variable than the Celts, more practical, "more permanent in their moods". The stolid quality of the Finns added to the temperament of the Slav made the Great Russian. The result of such a fusion was a creature of inexhaustible vitality and child-like simplicity, possessed of a "steadiness of patient purpose", never hurried, never surprised, "fresh in fancy, broken to patience", The Russian is fatalistic without "any captious blaming of Providence. In Russia one has no right to expect that everything will run smoothly". Sir Bernard Pares believes the Russian people to possess instincts which make for greatness; an instinct of order, an instinct of faith in Christianity, and an instinct of life and labor.

To explain the Russian we must look at the country in which he has lived, for he is, in many respects, the product of his environment. Russia, situated between Europe

and Asia, has been a melting pot and a battle field for Occidental and Oriental cultures. It has furnished an arena whereon the Eastward and Westward-moving nations of the world might meet, and it has suffered accordingly. The topography of the country has exerted a powerful influence in the development of the Russians. Only a "strong national character" held the people together, and this national character had as its backbone the "instinct for brotherhood and solidarity".* Because there are no frontiers, the land has been open to attack. Old Russia boasted no seacoast, and consequently her people were driven to aggressive migrations and conquest. The rivers furnished the best means for commerce and for communication with the outside world. Along the rivers clustered the early colonies. "The territorial growth of Russia like that of French America, is largely a river history." Primitive settlements were made along the Dnieper from the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea. Along the rivers the people moved, touching life, developing a social consciousness. This longing for society, which kept the Russian ever on the move, and which developed the habit of migration, is the basis of socialism as Russia conceives it. There were other reasons, however, for instability. The weather was not favorable to permanence of location. The short summer demanded tremendous effort if any agricultural success were to be expected. And after that brief summer came the long winter, given to musing and

*Russia and Reform, Sir Bernard Pares. pg.

contemplation, to idleness and dreaming. In the great forests there were dangers, and there was awful loneliness. The soil, too, was not particularly fertile, and the yield of the harvest was small. In the North were the frozen plains of Siberia, in the middle of Russia the deep forests, and in the South the shallow black soil of the Steppes. So the Russian moved about, putting down no permanent roots anywhere. This moving and unsettled condition, together with the constant menace of invaders, did not furnish the permanency and stability out of which literature develops. It was this conspiracy of natural forces, this driving of the Russian from one place to another, that Sir Bernard Pares considers a definite cause of Russia's greatest problem, the problem of serfdom. Feudalism such as Europe knew could not exist in Russia because in any workable feudal system the peasant must be fixed to the land. In Russia there was an enormous amount of land and lots of room in which to move, so the people drifted from place to place.

It was the effort of the Russian Princes to fix the people to the land, to break up their nomadic habits, that changed to so great a degree the character of the people. Old Russia was democratic, and the people lived a free, rather romantic life. In those earliest days the woman was an Amazon type, a fearless fighter and a natural leader. It was the woman, not the man, who was the head of the family. With the establishment of the patriarchal

system, woman's place changed. Under Byzantine and Tartar influence, she lost entirely her old place of power. By depriving woman of her proper place as teacher of her children, Russia lost one of its greatest opportunities for education. The mental and moral life of woman degenerated and she became a mere vassal, fit only to bear and bring up slaves. In the earliest days the Russian people lived in tribal fashion, in isolated districts, separated from each other by vast distances of uncultivated country.

With the establishing of Kiev as the chief port, and with the advance of commerce with Byzantium markets, the "Grand Princes of Rus" came into existence. There was one Grand Prince of Kiev, and under his control were smaller rulers. Taxation and tribute became parts of their program. "Like the early English Kings, the Grand Princes of Rus made periodic tours of their dominions and dependencies, to be fed and entertained throughout the winter, and to fix and collect their dues and taxes, tribute and tolls. Usually these visitations--solemn progresses with the whole of the princely retinue, who of course shared in gifts and tribute--began in November and ended in April. Contributions were paid sometimes in coin, more usually, perhaps, in furs and skins, corn and slaves, honey and wax. When the Prince returned to Kiev with the spring, all had been made ready for the summer trade. Trees had been felled, boats had been built, and when June came, a great flotilla of small craft floated, sailed, or rowed down the Dnieper,

entered the Black Sea, and so reached the Byzantine ports.... With the official convoys went the boats of private merchants, under the protection of the Prince's fighting men."* A very romantic picture, surely! But it was the beginning of the subjugation of a free people, and it succeeded because there was instinct in the Russian people a love of order, together with a distaste for the responsibility and burden of government. Had they been able to see themselves in the time of Ivan the Terrible, as a people crushed and without self-respect, the Princes might not have had such an easy conquest.

It is necessary also to know something of the racial background of these people, in order to understand their reaction to the impositions that were put upon them. The Russians are Slavs, modified in certain respects by race blends. The Norman influence has been considerable. The Russian state is founded on Scandinavian principles. The military organization, laws and customs are from Scandinavia. Later, other influences, especially German, modified and changed these traditional inheritances to a greater or less degree.

Although she had much of her organization as a state from Scandinavia, Russia had its great sister institution, the Church, from Byzantium. It is this fact that accounts for what Professor Wiener calls the "intellectual stagnation" that existed in Russia from the introduction of

*Russia, from the Varangians to the Bolsheviks, R. Beazley. 89

Christianity to nearly the end of the seventeenth century. The acceptance of Greek-Orthodox faith was one of the most important factors that led to the isolation of Russia. Contact or intercourse with Europe, and the religion of Rome, was discouraged. Bulgarian priests carried Christianity to Russia in their own tongue, preaching against the Latins, that is, the Roman Catholics. In receiving Christianity from Constantinople the Russians rejected the "claims of Rome, as they rejected the claims of Islam and Judaism; by this they cut themselves off from the chief civilization of the Western, and even of the Christian, world--in particular they severed themselves from their brother Slavs of the Polish stock, with momentous consequences. Russia was the chief convert to Greek Christianity; the Russian Emperor was long the supreme earthly protector and champion of the Eastern church; and the church of Russia has shown itself in history, not only the largest in extent, but certainly the freest, most courageous, patriotic, spiritual, and active of all branches of the Orthodox communion. . . . Holy Russia has been no empty phrase. Constantly one finds the religious element surprising one afresh by the depth, the ubiquity, and the subtlety of its action in Russian history. Constantly one has to recognize its power of accomplishing what nothing else can do."* Thus we see that the acceptance of Greek-Orthodox Christianity, instead of including Russia in a broader world fellowship, isolated her. She was alone,

*Russia, from the Varangians to the Bolsheviks, R. Beazley, p.19

with the war-like Finns on the North, the nomad tribes on the South, the Tartars and more Finns on the East, and on the West a civilization which was being made entirely inaccessible. There was hatred between the Slavs and the Germans, Lithuania was a menace, and later, when she had become suspicious of the intent of Russia, Poland was to be feared.

Under such conditions it is not likely that literature would flourish. There was no spirit in the new religion. It was only a form, and Christianity and Paganism were remarkably blended! The Bulgarian language was not a familiar vehicle of expression. The old Russian language had been called vulgar and rude, and use of it was discouraged. Such culture as Byzantium had to offer could not be accepted because there was no common means of communication. Through Bulgaria and Poland came some scattered legendary lore. All literary effort was in the hands of the clergy. The Princes were ignorant and illiterate, and too busy to write.

The earliest literary expression was in the songs, or bîlini, which were slightly Homeric in quality and not written. Most of these songs were Oriental in origin, having come in with Christianity. They enjoyed a wide range of subjects, but were chiefly the songs of heroes. Morfill, in "Slavonic Literature" gives five cycles of these songs; the Cycle of the Bogatîri Starshii, or Older Heroes; the Cycle of Vladimir, Prince of Kiev; the Cycle of Novgorod; the Cycle of

Moscow; the Cycle of the Cossacks. Mr. Morfill also refers to a cycle dealing with Peter the Great. The metres in these songs were irregular. No attempt was made to collect or preserve these songs until early in the nineteenth century. During the popularity of French at the Russian court, there was no interest displayed in what was considered a rude and native poetry. Pushkin and the Romantic Revival brought these songs before the public. In 1818, sixty of these ballads were published.

There are also very old religious songs for festivals and feast days. The tribal songs are perhaps the oldest and the most valuable. They tell of the customs and traditions of the early people. These tribal melodies, together with the ceremonial songs, are strongly colored by native superstition. They are mythological, belonging to a pagan religion. In the later ceremonial songs, an interesting mingling of Christian and pagan qualities is found. The festivals to the old Gods were celebrated quite naively with the Christian piety, and the newer church holidays were linked up with the old pagan ones.

The fairy stories of Russia have a great antiquity. Perhaps because none of this early literature was written it retains a freshness that is quite unusual. The stories were preserved in remote villages, and told by bards. Many of them are purely Russian in origin, while others can be traced to an Eastern source, probably India. Yet the Russians gave such individuality to these borrowed tales that they, too, seem to be original. Unlike the Scandinavian heroes

these do not seek for victory in battle, and for bloody revenge, but are rather "imbued with a communal spirit which is characteristic of Russian popular life. They are as much Russian as Rustem is Persian."* The Russian peasant is a good story teller. He has a keen dramatic sense, is witty and imaginative. The stories lost nothing in the telling. Yet they retained their simplicity. They do not carry a moral. Because of their unchanged character they form the closest possible connection with antiquity. Lack of chronology is one of the most interesting things about old Russian literature. The passing of centuries found these tales untouched. They neither improved nor deteriorated. The products of the eleventh and the seventeenth centuries are almost identical. The imported stories have as their theme such events as the Trojan War, or such persons as Alexander the Great. There are also many tales that are to be found in Grimm's Tales. Pilgrimages to the Holy Land began soon after the introduction of Christianity, and the Crusades offered colorful material. Later, with the coming of the Tartars, another quality was added. There are also tales from Servian and Bulgarian sources.

In the field of the written epic "The Word of Igor's Armament" stands as a work of poetical merit. It is chiefly concerned with pagan divinities, with only chance references to Christianity, It shows a bygone civilization, and breathes the spirit of the old northern Sagas.

*Russian Literature, Prince Kroptkin. 89

Examples of the first conscious literary effort are the Chronicles, or Town's histories, made by the clergy. The first really Russian chronicle was that of Nestor, a monk of Kiev, (1056-1114). He had read the Byzantine historians, and in his chronicle we find a strange mixture of legend and history not unlike the Arthurian material of England. These chronicles extend in a remarkably orderly chain to the days of Alexis Mikhailovich, father of Peter the Great. A gap occurs at the time of Ivan the Terrible, and at the time of Basil. According to Karamzim, every town had its annalist, and some towns boasted several. The chronicles saved historical events in Russia from oblivion. There are interesting chronicles of Kiev, Novgorod, Suzdal, and Volhynia, as well as court chronicles. The Chronograph of Sergius Koubasov is a record extending from the beginning of the world to the election of Mikhail Romanov. It shows a liberal borrowing from Byzantine chronicles, but is very personal in its account of Ivan the Terrible, and furnishes valuable studies of the Moscovite Princes. Koshikhin, in a work on the Russian government, gives a picture of the manners of the time. His work is concerned with the aristocracy, and he does not mention the peasants.

The first printing press was set up in Moscow in 1564 and "An Apostol" was printed. It contained the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles. The superstitious Russians drove out the printers as an evil influence, and went back to hand copying.

The Domostroi, by Monk Sylvester, is a book on household management. It shows the family life of the time, and the very menial place of woman. It makes clear that the father was the overlord of the house, and that there was no connection between family and state.

There were books of prayers and instructions, many, and confused versions of the Old Testament, manuals of weekly readings, all from Byzantium. The church realized early that the religious instinct so strong in the people must be satisfied. These tracts and sermons form the main body of Russian literature from the introduction of Christianity to the middle of the eighteenth century. The priest was the man of letters, and it was this fact that made it possible for him to gain such a hold over the seemingly more powerful Princes, who could not even sign their names. The leadership displayed by the Princes showed their Scandinavian origin.

There were raids and attacks upon Byzantium, resulting in interesting race mixtures. Yet these political activities in no way interfered with the religious and literary life of the people, meager as the latter was.

Although the literary activities were confined to the churchmen, the Princes were furnishing the raw material for a literary production. Kiev had grown into an organized state, prosperous, and cultured, with churches, trade and commerce, but without the representation that would make it a capital. Republican election and a very free spirit still prevailed in Old Novgorod. The wealth of Kiev lay largely in her slaves,

who had been captured in raids. "Slave-raids and wars of all kinds filled the houses of the rich and powerful with serfs though a great part of the captives were sent abroad to foreign markets. The chief articles of early Russian export trade were slaves and furs."* A lively trade was carried on with Muhammadan and Byzantine markets. However, with the beginning of the eleventh century, interest was directed away from commerce and trade toward agricultural pursuits. The slaves instead of being exported were put to work on the land. This was the first movement toward the enslavement of the lower class in Russia. It prepared the way for the enserfment of the peasantry in the sixteenth century. The simple free-man, who, in Old Novgorod would have led a free life, was, in Kiev, in a sense, a slave. Thus the breach between the common people and the ruling class began to widen, and the Russian peasant lost more and more of the qualities which in the past had made him such a distinct personality. The "divorce of classes, the growth of slavery, and the degradation of the poorer freeman, are the chief causes of the ruin of the Social Order of early Russia".**

Too much material prosperity, the ever increasing menace of the invading nomadic tribes of the Steppes, internal feuds and disorder among the Princes, together with constant migration toward Galicia and to Novgorod, caused the break-up of Kiev.

* Russia from the Varangians to the Bolsheviks, R. Beazley, p.33.

**Russia from the Varangians to the Bolsheviks, R. Beazley.

Novgorod has been called the starting point of Russian history. Certainly it represented the old free Russia. It had been the central town before Kiev developed into so powerful a state, and after the downfall of Kiev it regained its position as the central city, which position it held until Moscow became a power. Never powerful as a political center, Novgorod retained the old flavor, the old charm of Russia.

The invasion of the Tartars in the thirteenth century changed the whole course of Russian history. In 1224 these Asiatics broke upon Russia. Under a mongol chief, the hordes swept down upon Russia. When the Russians fled to the Dnieper in their battle with the Tartars in May, 1224, it was supposed that the invaders would pursue them beyond its borders. One of the riddles of history lies in the fact that the Tartars stopped at the Dnieper. Had they crossed it, the entire course of European history would have been changed. A second invasion in 1237 devastated Russia. Old Kiev perished, Moscow was taken, only Novgorod, remote behind her marshlands was left unsacked, and she was saved only by complete submission to the Tartar rule. The Russian Princes were compelled to visit the Khan on the Lower Volga, and be given permission to rule, and instructions how to rule, and to pay taxes or furnish troops. Members of the Princely families were forced or led into marriage with the Tartars, so that we find the Princes of Moscow resembling more closely the Tartar Khan than the old Russian Princes,

(Recalled by Genghis Khan)

and the autocracy of Moscow built upon a mongol foundation. Sir Bernard Pares, in "Russia and Reform" points out that the Tartars ruled for over two hundred years in Russia by sheer weight of numbers.

The Russians resisted the invaders, but finding resistance in vain, they grew hopeless. The Tartars were "greedy, hateful oppressors who degraded the Russian under their yoke until despair came to be almost an instinct with them". The old reckless, colorful days of the Princes were gone; commerce and trade died; individual liberty quite vanished; the colorful markets were no more; the churches were destroyed; the old blood was contaminated; the Russia of the Middle Volga was crushed, and culture and civilization were extinguished except for the National Church. "The Tartar invasion tended to isolate Russia from Western Europe, and thus to, later, give a more revolutionary character to Russia's attempts to reeducate herself in European civilization".* "The half-oriental seclusion of Russian women, which lasts, in a measure, till the reforms of Peter the Great, is probably to a large extent, of Tartar origin--though Byzantine contributory influence must be recognized. And the same may perhaps be said of the tortures, mutilations and floggings, the distant and painful banishments and forced labor, of the later Russian laws, of much of the military equipment and civil dress

*Russia and Reform, Pares, p.184.

of Russians till the time of Peter the Great. ... But the Tartar influence also produced, at least indirectly, a surprising increase in the comparative power and resources of the church."*

However, out of devastation and desolation came a definite political instinct. A new system began to develop, led by the Moscovite Princes, and a new center of Russian life was established in Moscow. Russian autocracy developed, and the rule of the Princes of Moscow began. These Princes acted as deputies for the Tartars. They had a despotic temperament, which developed into the "incarnate tradition of national dictatorship". They were hard and cruel, and basely unjust to their subjects, collecting taxes and fees under threat of Tartar punishment. They were not interested in the people whom they ruled, but were motivated by an ambition for political aggrandisement. They played for favor with the Tartars, and became so ambitious that they made advances to Rome. It was not their purpose to bring Latin culture to Russia, nor to benefit their people by "opening a window on the West". Their motives were entirely selfish, but without realizing it, they but added fuel to the fires of the religious war between the Greek and Roman churchly powers.

Moscow was destined to become powerful. Her geographical position on the Moskva, near the courses of the Volga and the Oka, was strategic. At the intersection

*Russia from the Varangians to the Bolsheviks, R. Beazley.

between Novgorod and Kiev, Moscow held the central position between the north and the south of Russia. It stood in the middle of Great Russia. Added to these natural advantages was the absolute power of the Princes. When the Metropolitan of the Russian church was moved to Moscow, church and state allied in the building of a new national center, the establishment of Mother Moscow, the sacred city. With each succeeding Prince the power of Moscow grew, and unity of church and state was more firmly cemented.

Under Ivan III, the Reuniter of the land, old Novgorod was conquered; the Tartar overlordship came to an end; all Russia acknowledged a master, and the Moscovite Empire came into existence. A new national feeling was born, which found its expression in the formation of a highly centralized autocratic state. A program of expansion was developed, relationships with other countries were established, and, before the close of Ivan's life, he was the Tsar, the ruler of a great Russian nation.

Moscow became a holy city, a "heaven-protected citadel to watch over the interests, and guard against the dangers of the Russian land and race",* and the Grand Prince considered himself the head of the Orthodox world. From Byzantium came the term Autocrat, and the national emblem, the double-headed eagle. "The Tsar was more absolute over his subjects than any other sovereign in the world. Moscow said, 'The will of the Tsar is the will of God, and the will

*Russia from the Varangians to the Bolsheviks, R. Beazley.

of God is the Tsar the fulfiller'. The ordinary man of Moscow said, 'I know not. Only God and the Tsar know.'"* In the old Domstroy one finds these words. "If you serve loyally the earthly Tsar, and fear him, you learn to fear the heavenly Tsar. The former is temporary; the latter is eternal and is an impartial judge."** It is this conception of unity of church and state, of God and Tsar, that explains so much of the apparent unreasonable submission of the Russian people.

The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saw political supremacy for Moscow, but the cultural life of the people sank ever lower and lower. For this the national church is largely responsible. The mental and moral life of the people reached low tide. The introduction of printing provided a Greek Testament, which the illiterate churchmen could not read. Knowledge was feared, for in it the Russians saw a heretic opposition to their one and only belief, Orthodoxy. The Latin "dogs" were hated and feared, and the Russians enslaved themselves to the only thing in which they had faith, firmly closing their doors to any outside contamination. In their passionate resistance to outside influence, especially to the power of Rome, the Russians were clutching the faith that was so vital to them. The church made stronger the doors, keeping the people in a strange barbarous darkness. Through Poland, however, Latin

* History of Russia, V.O. Klyuchévski. p1

**Family Life in Russia, Elnett, p.31.

culture was creeping in, and moving toward Russia. It was in Kiev that the spiritual revival was to break forth, and from this ancient political center to spread to Moscow.

In the seventeenth century the great war of dissent began. The Old Believers opposed any change in the Liturgical Texts. The West Russian culture of Kiev was viewed with mistrust by Moscow, but the need for enlightenment was felt. Printing was entirely in the hands of the clergy, and there was almost no reading public. An actual need for education began to grow apparent. There were no schools in Moscow, and the confusion of thought in matters religious was so serious that some revision of ecclesiastical books was imperative. In the middle of the seventeenth century Kiev scholars were permitted to come to Moscow, bringing with them the beginnings of Polish-Latin culture. Simeon Polotsky, the first court and church poet of Russia, was successful in maintaining a difficult position by associating himself closely with the royal family. The saintly Demetrius, too, did much to bridge the gulf between the new and the old. Schools of the Kievian order were established and "not only life and the church, literature and thought, but even the language was for the first time lastingly smitten as by an alien wave, through the translations of the Kievians".*

A notable inovation was the importation of traveling players. Tsar Alexis found orthodox endorsement of this departure in the fact that the Emperors of Byzantium attended

*A Literary History of Russia, Brückner, p. 48.

the circus. Regardless of the Tsar's attitude the old Russians looked askance at such masquerades.

The native literary productions of the century are largely theological, and in no way express the people. A gigantic program of expansion and growth was completed in this century, but there was no corresponding literary development. In all this great"peasant empire" Moscow was the only town. There were villages and forts, but no citizen class. The government recognized only the nobility, and the peasant was like a dumb ox chained to the soil. "All thought was centered on externals, every change made the people uneasy, sociableness and free intercourse was unknown; Byzantine observance of forms in religion and knowledge, blind senseless obedience to every command or arbitrariness, the killing of all pride or higher feeling, and the tabooing of all thought were the marks of the men of this age."* About 1630 Prince Khvorostínin wrote verses showing up the debasement of the people, and the falsehoods on which their lives were built. Turgenev wrote later on the same theme, "the Russian lies".

But in spite of such conditions the sparks of rebellion burned. The general dissatisfaction began to find expression. The old patriarchal system of family life began to weaken, and womanhood came out, at first very timidly, to be sure, from her isolation and seclusion. The world outside the walls of Russia was calling. In 1697 an embassy

*A Literary History of Russia, Bruckner, p.56.

was sent abroad with the young Tsar, Peter, as one of its number.

It would be easy to overestimate the service Peter rendered Russia. He is such a dramatic figure that it is hard to make a just evaluation of him. Bruckner, in "A Literary History of Russia", (p.p.58-59) calls him "merely Ivan IV amid new surroundings--the same barbarian, worthy of the 'mezze bestie' over whom he had to rule, just as sensual and cruel as Ivan, as heartless and fond of violence, identifying himself with the state in the same way, and demanding of all his subjects devotion to the same, trampling down and mutilating whoever in any way resisted his levelling or enslaving men to most primitive state demands. Thus he carried through the turning of all peasants, without distinction, into serfs, and put the same poll-tax on them all." The difference between Peter and Ivan lies not "in the men, their characters and their temperaments, but in the age" which produced them. Peter attempted to do all at once the tasks that had through the two preceeding centuries been left undone. He built a new national capital by strengthening a swamp along the seacoast with the bones of one hundred thousand peasants. He took the crown from the church and in its place created the vascillating Holy Synod. He established an absolute monarchy, deifying and worshipping the state. His domestic policy was utilitarian, not liberal or idealistic, as it is often called. His foreign policy was aggressive. He traveled, and coveted for his native

country much that he saw in the West. What he failed to see was that culture is the result of evolutionary processes. He dreamed of conquest and expansion, and fought for twenty-one years to gain a seacoast for Russia. He fought with the Turks on the Black Sea and the Swedes on the Baltic. He developed a Russian army on German and Swedish military principles, and made the rank of nobility a reward for military service. He established distinct class lines between the serving-aristocracy, the bourgeoisie and the peasanty,making the rule of the landlord over the peasant absolute. This enthusiastic monarch tried to force down the throats of his people a culture which only the gradual development of centuries could accomplish. They swallowed, but in no way understood what manner of food they were being fed. Their monarch also commanded that they wake up, and dance and sing! With awful suddenness he brought woman out of retirement and placed her in the center of noisy activity. He made an honest effort to lift the gloom and ignorance under which his people lived. In his desire to educate the people he had the Slavonic alphabet replaced by Russian, except for ecclesiastical purposes. He encouraged imitation of the French and German literary models, and stimulated the development of secular literature. He imported theatrical troops from France and Germany. Under his rule,trade grew, natural resources were developed, the public revenue was trebeled and the Russian people heavily taxed. In churchly circles Latin Christianity continued to invade the

Orthodox field, the churchmen continued in astounding ignorance, and the church grew in material wealth. Although his methods may not be above criticism it is certain that Peter deserves great credit for his effort to stir the Russian people out of inertia into some kind of activity. Peter made the first attempt to overcome the isolation which the invasion of the Tartars had brought about. He is not alone responsible for the opening of the window on the West. Russia was beginning to look toward Europe as early as the fifteenth century. The window was opening slowly, and Peter flung it wide. "He discovered things ripening extremely slowly; he found an evolution which was advancing as quietly as possible, and suddenly turned it into a stormy enterprise, into a revolution."* Pares quotes the historian, Shcherbátoff, as estimating that Peter crushed into some thirty years a movement that should have taken two centuries. Peter was not a thinker, not a philosopher, or he would have sensed the result of a too-sudden change. He was fired with a burning desire to see his country take her rightful place with the other nations of the world, and the sooner the better. No sacrifice was too great, no labor too hard, if that task might be accomplished. He did not ask the people what they wanted, for he believed they did not know. He willed to change them, and if the enforced change was an external one only, he did not know it. Lacking imagination

*Sketch of the Story of the Russian Censorship, N. Engelhardt, p.5.

and patience, he could not see a developing program, but only violent change.

The literature of his time shows this surface and external character. He founded schools, introduced the study of science, and "laid the foundation for the mental emancipation of Russia".* Peter's interest in literature lay in the fact that it could serve as an instrument for the Europeanizing of Russia. Translations, especially from the German, increased. Tatishchev and Lomonósov wrote after the German models, and Kantemír and his followers after the French. The French imitations were flimsy things. Tatíshchev very definitely, and Kantemir in a small way, worked for the abolishment of Slavonic as the literary language of Russia. Sumarókov attempted to create native forms in literature instead of copying foreign models. He did not realize what a task he had before him. He is remembered only by the vital impetus he gave to Russian drama. Lomonósov fostered the Ode, established a grammar, and began science in Russian. "The crop for which Peter tilled the soil came up but slowly. He could drill armies in the European fashion and stamp fleets out of the surface of the sea and gain with them the battles of Poltáva and the Aland Islands; the annals of the mind and of literature had, until far into the century nothing remotely similar to record.

*Literary History of Russia, Bruckner, p.67.

But even here the numbing blight of Asiatic immobility had been exorcised, and Russia was to be led forward ever more rapidly out of spiritual darkness into the light."*

Literature late in Peter's reign was stilted and unnatural. Much of it was "occasion" literature. With Catherine, however, came a new spirit. She was a student, an earnest disciple of culture, and she reflected the philosophical spirit which was moving Europe. She had definite plans for the establishment of schools. It was her purpose to take Russian children, both girls and boys, from their homes at the age of five, place them in schools until they were nineteen or twenty, and give them a cultural education. She hoped by such a program to overcome the primitive, ignorant influence of the home from which the children came. That she was creating havoc by breaking up the family unit, she did not seem to realize. Of course there were not enough schools to carry out such a plan.

Alarmed by the French Revolution, Catherine retracted many of her liberal policies, yet she had done much toward the furtherance of real culture. More schools had been established, and foreign instructors, chiefly French, were employed. The aristocratic Russians welcomed such an opportunity, little knowing that their children were being taught a French culture which looked down upon everything

*Literary History of Russia, Bruckner, p.89.

Russian, including the language.

Addison, and the English satirical journals were translated into French and became popular with the French-reading public in Russia. These journals had a wholesome influence. They attacked established institutions, aroused controversy, and helped to create public opinion. Before the end of Catherine's reign foreign novels found their way into Russia. They did not stimulate native authors to write out of Russia's life, but led to superficial imitation. The historians alone were honestly and earnestly laying the foundations for a national literature. They appreciated European culture, but they desired it only as a means of interpreting and developing their own. To the sincere students of native history the superficiality of the French veneer, with which the Russian literary aspirants were covering themselves, was apparent. It is not surprising that, being suddenly thrown into the midst of life as the outside world had been living it, the Russian people should have become a little too enthusiastic. They were fascinated by things foreign, and had turned their backs on the solid facts of their own existence. It is perfectly true that, had they caught a vision of the real Russia, as some of her later literary men caught it, they would have been restrained by the lack of freedom of speech. But only the historians were looking at Russia. During the eighteenth century the aristocracy of Russia was completely emancipated, and the people were completely enslaved.

With Alexander I, (1801-1825), came a policy of peace, an age of reforms, and an honest desire on the part of a monarch to lead his people into better days. Alexander was a scholar, and he also desired education for his people, not that they might resemble the people of Europe but that they might become better Russians. His policy was sound, but he lacked the force of will necessary to carry it out. He founded five universities, provided for elementary school supervision, and established funds for educational purposes. In 1818 a gradual emancipation of the serfs was begun. It was not unlike the plan of cutting off the dog's tail an inch at a time in order to save him pain. In this case it was the landowner who was to be spared the suffering. Alexander I felt that progress under the existing conditions was impossible, but his remedial measures were only partly successful. The great mass of the people were in abysmal ignorance, and there were no Russian scholars. Teachers for the sons of the gentry had to be imported, or the youths sent out to foreign schools. These youths had no background, no cultural traditions, no definite social or political views, and no very strong ethical principles.

The feverish imitation of French models, and the transient inspiration of Byron had passed by, leaving literature little improved. Nothing permanent had been gained from the enthusiasms. The youths of the thirties were not blinded by the glitter of things new so much as

they were swept along on a current of ecstatic conversion through the study of German philosophy. They developed no system, grasped no principles that were servicable to their country. Before they could get beyond a superficial stage of enlightenment and develop into an influence, the sons of the middle class were being initiated into the mysteries of education. Where the sons of the gentry had protested against their fathers, these middle class youths protested against the gentry. "This renewal of the intellectual class with every generation has led to the extreme democratisation of Russian society, and the frequent and varied evolution of talent,--artistic, musical, literary and political. But the democracy, lacking the moderation of established procedure, loses itself in a maze of inactive speculation. Lacking also historic perspective and philosophic precision, it is vascillating in its ultimate ends."* Russia has never produced a great philosopher. Her cultural movements, says Mr. Wiener, have been backed by young men and motivated by enthusiasm which dies out in the face of defeat, leaving the next generation to work up its own enthusiasm only to die out in its turn. Ripe, mature thinking might have saved the situation, but the case was in the hands of youth.

What might be called modern literature began to find expression in Russia in the nineteenth century. The literary men, turning their attention away from foreign

*Anthology of Russian Literature, Vol.II, Wiener. 89

models, began to find inspiration in the early songs and legends of their own country. Gréch, publishing a weekly journal in 1814, lamented the scarcity of Russian books. In the year 1812 there developed in Russia a national pride that expressed itself in patriotic songs. When the armies returned from abroad many ardent Russian youths prepared to reform the country. They had a romantic and sudden love for Russia, and a keen interest in social and political questions.

The philosophical movement developed, and out of it evolved three parties. In their search for a concrete solution to Russia's problems, they turned to history, trying to find the secret of the nation in its past. This group, called the Slavophiles, found inspiration in the philosophy of the German, Hegel. The idea that one nation always leads in the procession of mankind captivated them. They believed that it was time for Russia to take her place as the leading nation of the world. They had no very definite program for the accomplishment of this feat. They believed, however, that Russia had a culture superior to any in Europe. They were Orthodox in their belief and glorified Nationalism. They were the ardent defenders of autocracy, the one hundred percent Russians. Their interest in the peasant lay in the fact that having been the least contaminated by Western culture he was the best representative of the native Russian virtues. The Slavophiles attempted to bridge the gap between the peasant masses and the classes.

Another phase of the philosophical movement found expression in the Westerners. This group imitated Western culture, believing that Russia was advancing with Europe, though far behind. They idolized constitutionalism and were rampant realists.

The third group was a section of the Westerners, which came under the influence of French socialism. This group, the Socialists, was more radical than the Westerners. They are best represented by Bélinski and Herzen, of whom we shall speak later.

A romantic and violent reorganization of Russia was checked by a period of reaction and "obscurantism". The opposition of the reactionaries led to the Decembrist conspiracy of 1825. Although the social impulse was checked, the literary force continued to develop.

Karamzin had established a new style of writing, which was taken as a medium by the Romanticists, Bestuzhev, Marlinski, Lazhechnikov, and later Púshkin and Lérmontov. The influence of Sir Walter Scott was very strong in this school. The Russian novel was born, that peculiar vehicle of literary expression through which Russia became known in the world of letters.

It is not the purpose of this study to deal with the Russian novel, but to direct attention to a less powerful but no less interesting development of Russian literature,--the short story. The field of Russian short

story is so broad that it will be impossible to cover it. I have tried to choose the most representative writers, but it will be necessary to omit many names deserving to be included.

To simplify the problem I shall divide the writers of the Russian short story into three groups. The first group, representing the period of growth and development of a national literature, must include the names of Púshkin, Gogol, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and the master of the short story form, Anton Chekhov. The second period, featuring the literature of revolt, covers the purely modern school as Gorki, Andreev, and Kuprin conceived it. The third period is the period in which the Symbolists find their best representation in Sologub.

During the early part of the first period Russian literature was still a product of the land-owning nobility. Most of the writers of this first group were born in mansions. Their personal life and cultural surroundings gave an unconscious refinement to their writings. To these men literature was an outlet to avoid stagnation. It served as a substitute for political and social activity. Only in the field of literature could Russias finest minds find an opportunity for constructive work. They were serious men, who felt called upon to broaden the social vision and deepen the spiritual life of the people. They determined to make all of Russia acquainted with all of Russia, so they wrote

of different places and people. Their aim was not to give pleasure only, but to instruct.

Gazing at their loved Russia her literary men saw only her wounds and miseries. The outstanding product of the Empire was poverty; poverty of spirit as well as of fact. A rural Russia, "dreary, muddy or dusty, with meager fields, thin grasses, consumptive little groves, black or gray hillocks, and every where a tone so subdued, so monotonous, so full of melancholy! Decay breathes from the whole scene."

Because their conception of life was chiefly that of the aristocrat, these writers realized their inability to cope with the peasant problem. There was no common ground of meeting, but the literary men made an honest effort to reach the people. They realized that a change in Russia's condition could be brought about only through the action of the masses, and literature became the instrument for stirring the people, for informing and awakening them. Turgenev "discovered a human being in the peasant; Gogol discovered the discrepancies of a decaying feudal system";*the clergy, the patriots, the physical aspects of Russia, the peasants and the gentry all came in for study and analysis. But while Turgenev wrote artistically of the peasant, and Gogol painted in vivid colors the life of the Ukrainian people, the peasant himself remained unconscious of all the furor he was creating.

*Olgin, The Soul of the Russian Revolution, p.9

"He seldom stirred, he never protested. He was not conscious of his power. He was like a drop in a black sea under a heavy sky. There is no doubt that the keen men of this first group had a very definite premonition that some day the black sea would begin to heave, and rage, and storm. Hence that feeling of awe that the Russian Sphinx inspired in all writers."* It was a time of waiting and watching, until the seeds of discontent and rebellion should begin to send up shoots. The period is characterized by its terrible slowness. The writings of Turgenev and Gogol are more free from this spirit of inaction than are the works of less important writers. The literary language of Russia during this period is characterized by rhythm, dignity, and a certain beauty of expression.

Pushkin (1799-1837) is the first literary genius of Russia, and one of her great classic writers. In his hands the language of his country became a thing of beauty and power. Pushkin is first and foremost a poet, then a novelist and short story writer. He is the Russian Byron. Although he is the national poet of Russia, his poetry is not national. He is an imitator, but also a genuine artist.

In his youth his Russian nurse told him stories of Old Russia, saturating his young mind with fairy-tales. As he grew older he read in his father's library which was exclusively French. Later he studied under French tutors, developing a mastery of the French language and great admiration for the French writers. He admired Byron, and

*The Soul of the Russian Revolution, Olgin, p.10.

the English classics, also. He might have been the Russian Scott had he possessed greater confidence in his prose. He remained an imitator, but a great one. He is a lyric poet, a poet of beauty, who directed the whole course of Russian literature. "He refined and idealized the sordid and paltry with an imperishable and radiating magic." He brought Russian poetry down off its stilts and showed what treasures can be found in the simple peasant life. Gogol did the same thing for the novel. Both men refrained from history, and both directed creation and criticism in the same direction. But Pushkin was always a romanticist.

His literary career is varied. In its early period it shows the Byronic influence. It is a period of revolt and a tearing down of established forms. By sympathy he was a Liberal. His writings during this period are characterized by witty epigrams, epistles and odes. After the failure of the Decembrist Revolution in 1825 he became more conservative, more calm and sober, and less critical. He began a searching analysis of Russian life that had great political and social influence. He was fundamentally a conservative, and his conservatism "overrode logic and reality".* His final appearance is as a worshiper of autocracy. A born "singer of freedom", he was ready to "place himself without reserve at the service of the Tsar instead of that of the country".**

* A Literary History of Russia, Bruckner, p.202.

**Bruckner, p.203.

In the "Prisoner of the Caucasus" he furnished new poetic materials for Russia; in his "Gypsies" he pictured in beautiful detail the roving, free life of a wandering people; in "Boris Godunóv" he furnished Russia with her first piece of great national literature.

In 1834 two short stories appeared, "The Queen of Spades", by Pushkin, and "The Cloak", by Gogol. The one by Pushkin was of the old out-going romanticism, while the one by Gogol marked the beginning of the new realism,--the purely Russian style. There is nothing about Pushkin's story to stamp it Russian. But Gogol strikes in "The Cloak" for the "first time that truly Russian note of deep sympathy with the disinherited".* It is this realistic quality that found its great expression in Turgenev and Tolstoy. "We are all descended from Gogol's 'Cloak'", said a Russian writer.

Gogol (1809-1852), born in the revolutionary Steppe region, is the first realist in the Russian field. He is a keen humorist, and his witty sayings have become a part of the Russian vocabulary. His play "The Inspector General" is excellent comedy. It is a clever satirical attack on all officialdom, with the judge system coming in for special attention. The play, written in 1836, was produced in Moscow, and NicholasI attended the opening. The play was well received but, contrary to the author's expectations, provoked no reforms.

*Introduction to "Best Russian Short Stories," edited by Thomas Seltzer.

Gogol is a tragic figure. His life is as interesting as his works. Living in the unkindly atmosphere of St. Petersburg, homesick for his southern home, he escaped through imagination and fancy to the place where his heart always lived. His Little Russian sketches are a product of this homesickness. A rather morbid self-consciousness coupled with an observation working scientifically, gives an eerie, fantastic turn to some of his work. His romanticism is often Hoffmann-like. But this quality is finely tempered by humor. Only occasionally does he overstep the bounds of realism and give us the grotesque or symbolic. Often he combines these elements with strange success. "'The Nose', which gets lost and wanders about, then reappears, 'The Coach', with its sudden turn to the tragic,"* show vividness and realistic comedy. Gogol, being a southern Russian is especially imaginative, a dreamer. His laughter was always tempered by a strong humanity. Two volumes, "Arabesques", 1834, and "Tales", 1836 are representative of this fact.

His story "The Cloak" is perhaps his best known literary effort. It is really a novelette. "If Gogol strove to make us feel the misery of life, and at the same time to open our souls for a real understanding of our fellow human beings, for moral indignation over the wrongs of the world, and for the highest altruistic emotions,

*A Literary History of Russia, Bruckner, p.253.

he succeeded in this small sketch, which is the history of one humble ordinary creature crushed under the weight of a cruel and senseless order."'What are you doing? Am I not your brother?' this poor funny man seems to cry out for generations over the entire length and breadth of Russia."* This uncouth petty official wins our sympathy. He is not a caricature. Of the quality of humor in his work Gogol said, "The comic is hidden everywhere, only living in the midst of it we are not conscious of it, but if the artist brings it into his work, on the stage say, we shall roll about with laughter, and only wonder we did not notice it before." One of Gogol's favorite quips was, "Don't blame the mirror if your mouth is crooked". And with characteristic truth he held a mirror up to Russia. His was the first really national work.

"Dead Souls", written in 1842, shows all of Russia. 'Soul' and 'peasant' being identical in Russia, the implications of the novel were not doubtful. When Gogol records the reading of the first chapter of "Dead Souls" to Pushkin, he says, "The expression of Pushkin, who at other times always laughed at my reading, (and he loved laughing), gradually became darker and darker, and at last clouded over altogether. When I came to an end he broke out into the words, 'God, what a sad country Russia is!'"**

* The Soul of the Russian Revolution, Olgin, p.48.

**A Literary History of Russia, Bruckner, p.259.

Russia lost much by Gogol's change of attitude after the first part of "Dead Souls" was written. After the appearance of "Select Passages from a Correspondence with Friends", which Gogol offered to the public instead of the second volume of "Dead Souls", Bêlinsky, the critic, wrote to him, saying, "What are you doing? The great writer who, with his wondrously artistic, deeply life-like creations has contributed so mightily to Russia's self-knowledge, giving it the possibility to look at itself as in a mirror, comes forward with a book in which, in the name of Christ and of the church, he teaches the barbarian squires to extract still more from the peasants, the 'unwashed muzzles'." * This same Bêlinsky said of Gogol's earlier art, "It is more than a picture or mirror of reality, one that resembles reality more than reality resembles itself, because it is an artistic reality which includes in itself all the partial phenomena of such a reality".

The moralist in Gogol killed the artist in him, and the ascetic took his place. The morbid qualities in his nature grew, and his later work bears little resemblance to his earlier.

During Gogol's lifetime the peasant began to receive some consideration politically, as well as being a subject for literary attention. Serfdom had reached its height under Catherine II, and had developed into such a

*A Literary History of Russia, Bruckner, p.263.

problem that in 1842 a law was published permitting landowners to liberate their peasants. This act differed from a similar one which had been passed in 1803 giving the landowner permission to free his serfs, in that the act of 1842 required the landlord to supply his liberated serfs with land. "The government saw the danger of creating a huge landless proletariate and steered a middle course by making the law of 1842 faculative." "In 1847 peasant communes were permitted to buy themselves out of serfdom, with the land they cultivated, if the estate of their master was sold publicly by auction for debt. Such sales were frequent at this period, but the concession was subsequently so hedged round by restrictions that it became worthless. In the condition of the 'State', (or 'Crown') peasants some improvement was effected by the creation of a Ministry of State Property, (1837)."*

Peculiar to Russian literature is the "unaffected conception that the poor and lowly are on a plane of equality with the so-called upper classes. When the Englishman Dickens wrote with his profound pity and understanding of the poor, there was yet a bit of remoteness, perhaps, even,a bit of caricature, in his treatment of them. ....The Russian writes of the poor, as it were, from within, as one of them, with no eye to theatrical effect.....There is no insistence upon peculiar virtues or vices. The poor are portrayed just as they are,"** with true universality

* Russia from the Varangians to the Bolsheviks, G.A. Birkett,p.401.

**An Introduction to The Best Russian Short Stories, Edited by Thomas Seltzer.

in the drawing. There is love and pity for oppressed mankind, and an earnest desire to improve the lot of humanity. Writing, to the Russians, is a serious business. "They demand that fiction shall be a true mirror of life, and be of service to life. A Russian author, to achieve the highest recognition, must be a thinker. He need not necessarily be a finished artist. This is the secret of the marvelous simplicity of Russian literary art, and it finds its exemplification in Turgenev and Tolstoy."

Turgenev (1818-1883) stands as the creator of a school of writing. He is complete master of form. He labored and polished his work as did Pushkin. He wrote chiefly of the aristocracy, and his sphere of writing is limited in point of time as well as in form. He lacked the powerful epical impulse. His Russia is all before the Reform. After 1870 he lived in France where he was an intimate friend of Flaubert, a patron of Zola, and a friend of Daudet and Maupassant. One realizes what it must have meant to argue a Frenchman into reading a novel in several volumes, by a "barbarian"! But Turgenev persuaded the French to read Tolstoy. "As the self-appointed promoter of Russian letters aboad, he had interested himself particularly in pushing Tolstoy's work, in spite of a (personal) break with the author. It is reported that when Charles Edmond suggested to Turgenev that the Paris 'Temps' would welcome a contribution from him, he took Edmond to his

rooms, and handed him, as the choicest possible offering, a manuscript translation of Tolstoy's "Sebastopol Tales". He wasn't, he added, worthy to"unloose the latchet of this man's shoes."*

Turgenev possessed sound culture, a humane temperament, an aristocratic mind and entire independence. He believed in the power of poetry in literature, and quoted Pushkin. Tolstoy wrote of him, "Turgenev was here again, and was just as charming and brilliant. But, he is a little like a fountain spouting imported water, and one is always afraid that the jet may be exhausted and the fountain cease playing."** The philosophy of Tolstoy was a source of irritation to this "most likable of pagans", who enjoyed life and feared death. He was not really an atheist, but a positivist. He expressed his own philosophy by saying, "I shall say briefly that I am, above all, a realist, and chiefly interested in the living truth of the human face; to everything supernatural I am indifferent, and I don't believe in absolutes and systems; I love freedom better than anything, and so far as I can judge I am sensitive to poetry. Everything human is dear to me, Slavophilism is alien, and so is all manner of orthodoxy."*** How very far Turgenev had grown from the Russian tradition!

His art is always wholesome because it is highly

* Turgenev, The Man--His Art--And His Age. Yarmolinsky, p.348.

**Turgenev, Yarmolinsky, p.351.

***Turgenev, Yarmolinsky, p.356.

artistic. One of his most notable stories is the novelette called "A Lear of the Steppe". Some quotations from it will serve to suggest his style. "Petrovich Kharlof, (the hero of the tale), to tell the truth, was not very devout; he rarely went to church. He used to say to himself that his bodily dimensions forbade it; that he took up the room of too many of the faithful. But these attacks usually terminated in the following way: he began to whistle, and then in a voice of thunder ordered his carriage to be brought out. A few minutes later he would be seen trundling about the country, and flourishing his whip-hand above his old cap, as who should say, "The world is ours!" After all he was a Russian." Turgenev's nature descriptions are after this pattern: "It was a lovely day; I do not believe that there is such September weather anywhere in the world but in Russia. It was so still that more than a hundred paces off one could hear a squirrel leaping among the dry leaves which already strewed the ground; far away one could hear a dead branch detach itself from the top of a tree, fall lightly from bough to bough, and finally drop upon the soft grass. The air, neither warm nor cold, but full of odors, and as if slightly acidulated, brought a gentle tingling to the cheeks and eyes. A thread of gossamer, fine and flexible as that of a silk worm, came floating through the air; a sure sign that the fine weather would last. The sun gave a pale soft light, almost like

moonlight." This story, is as its name indicates, the story of a Russian Lear who is moved to divide his earthly kingdom between his daughters. Of course his premonitions of death are not well founded, and he lives on, miserable and ashamed of the depths to which his daughters have allowed him to sink. At the very last, almost like a wild animal, stung and mortified beyond endurance, he climbs upon the house he has given to his ungrateful children, and tears it down. Turgenev shows him to us in the following picture:

"Of a good third of the roof of the new house, not more than a skeleton was left. Two sides of the house were piled up with broken planks. On the floor of the garret, rising out of dust and the fragments, was a blackish mass, moving with a strange and unwieldly kind of activity; at one moment this creature shook furiously the only chimney that was left standing--the other being already in ruins; at the next it tore off a plank of the roof and hurled it to the ground; then seized a rafter with both hands and wrenched at it with violence. This was Kharlof. I was struck with his likeness to a bear; his head, his back, his shoulders, his legs planted wide apart, were all bear-like. The furious wind which had arisen blew about his rags and his long hair. It was horrible to see his body, naked as it appeared through the rents in his garments; and it was horrible to hear his hoarse and savage growlings."

Kharlof finally falls from the roof and is killed. Even in the tragic conclusion of this story Turgenev introduces his characteristic touches of humor. In describing the funeral of Kharlof he gives us this crisp touch. "Maximka, clad in a new jacket, had slipped in among the singers, with whom he intoned the hymns in a tenor of such piercing shrillness that none could doubt the sincerity of his attachment to the deceased." It is also true of Turgenev that he paints vivid pictures with a stroke, such as-- "A man in a long, loose serge coat, so old that antiquity seemed to have crystallized upon it." The work of Turgenev presents vivid pictures of contemporary Russian society, with its problems, the clash of ideas between the old and the new generations, and the struggles, the aspirations and the thoughts that engrossed the advanced youth of Russia; so that his collected works form a remarkable literary record of the successive movements of Russian society in a period of preparation, fraught with epochal significance, which culminated in the over-throw of Czarism and the inauguration of a new and untried democracy."

The best work of the writers of the first period in Russia is in the field of the long novel, and in this field, as the Master, stands Tolstoy. In 1887 Matthew Arnold said, "The Russian novel has now the vogue, and deserves to have it-----. The Russian novelist is Master of a spell to which the secret of human nature--both what is external and internal, gesture and manner no less than

thought and feeling--willingly make themselves known-----. In that form of imaginative literature, which in our day is the most popular and the most possible, the Russians at the present moment seem to me to hold the field." It was this high type of literary effort that had its effect on the short story writers after Tolstoy, for he left upon the literature of his country the stamp of health, mental and physical. He was unbiased, being above prejudices. The scope of his work is almost incredibly great. In deep sincerity he wrote of his findings through a psychical analysis of normal man. There was nothing of the supernatural in his treatment of his subjects, but always an almost fanatic love of truth. It is this feverish devotion to what he believed true that robs Tolstoy of joy, "that deepest instinct of religion". His theory of art rests on "his religion of humanitarianism". "Art", (he maintains), "is not, as the metaphysicians say, the manifestation of some mysterious Idea of beauty, or God; it is not...a game in which man lets off his excess of stored-up energy; it is not the expression of man's emotion by external signs; it is not the production of pleasing objects; and, above all, it is not pleasure; but it is a means of union among men, joining them together in the same feelings, and indispensable for the life and progress toward well-being of individuals and of humanity..... To evoke in one's self a feeling one has experienced, and.....

so to transmit that feeling--that others may experience the same feeling--this is the activity of art'."*

Since Tolstoy is so definitely a novelist we must regard him as an influence rather than as a contributing factor in a study of the Russian short story.

Dostoevsky's novel "Poor People" is merely an extension of Gogol's tale "The Cloak". But in Dostoevsky (1821-1881) the passion for the common people reaches its climax. Being a keen and able psychologist Dostoevsky made the human mind his study, becoming clinical in his merciless analysis. Unfortunately he used as his studies the abnormal and diseased. Much that we find in his writings is representative of the type of work called, so ignorantly, typically Russian. The most Russian thing about Dostoevsky's studies is not his abnormality but his humanity! "Between scenes of heartrending, abject poverty, injustice and wrong, and the torments of mental pathology, he managed almost to exhaust the whole range of human woe. And he analysed this misery with an intensity of feeling and a painstaking regard for the most harrowing details that are quite upsetting to normally constituted nerves. Yet his horrors must be forgiven him because of the motive inspiring them--an overpowering love and the desire to induce an equal love in others. It is not horror for horror's sake, as in Poe, but horror for a high purpose, for purification through suffering, which was one of the articles of Dostoevsky's faith."**

* Tolstoy, Paul E. More, p.p. 210-211.

**Introduction to Best Russian Short Stories, Seltzer.

Much of the horror we find in Dostoevsky's writing is, however, a mild reproduction of personal experience. He himself was sickly, morbid, and unfortunate. He was a victim of the ruthless methods of the government. Under Nicholas I he suffered for belonging to a small circle of literary men and officers who were followers of Petrashévsky. He was accused of having socialistic ideas and was condemned to death. He was granted a reprieve on the scaffold and sent to Siberia to serve a term in penal servitude. As a result of his confinement and the harrowing experiences he was forced to undergo, he became an epileptic. This fact undoubtedly added to his morbid interest in psychopathic studies. Life showed him its ugliest side. He did not try to make his writings palatable. Nature for him did not exist. "He is relentless and knows no pity; he talks as if the entire world were insane."

In his work can be seen the influence of Gogol, Dickens, Balzac, and Hoffmann.

The "Idiot", a novel, is a very "singular and upsetting" work. "The Christmas Tree and the Wedding" is a mild story, quite safe for high-strung nerves. Whether it is entirely representative of Dostoevsky is another matter. He is best known outside of Russia by his novel, "The Brothers Karamazov". Edward Garnett, in his introduction to Constance Garnett's translation of this book

says, "But exhaustive and indeed distressingly diffuse as is Dostoevsky's literary method it holds one helpless in its clutch, so amazing in its intensity and force is his creative genius. Immersed in this book one has the sensation of being carried along in a turbulent flood, engulfed in whirlpools of passionate feeling, whirled along in rapids of thought, caught up and held fast in fresh currents of mystical speculation. And the atmospheric pressure increases till the climax is reached." Mr. Garnett turns from critical appreciation to political discussion, and adds, "Were Dostoevsky to rise from the tomb today he would fiercely cry that his prophecies had come true, and that Russia had been basely betrayed by the Progressives and the Liberals and delivered into the hands of Bolshevik Communists and Marxists, whereas the Westerners would urge that Imperial Russia had been led to her ruin by the blind stupidity of the Autocracy and the dark forces of Rasputinism. It is impossible to separate Dostoevsky the fierce polemic champion of Orthodoxy from Dostoevsky the artist, but it is only fair to him to add that in his scathing satire on his generation in "The Possessed" he branded mercilessly both forces in the opposing camps. Though his political activities have been turned inside out his creative projections of ominous national types came to life and walked the land a generation after his death."

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
LIBRARY

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
LIBRARY

Before 1820 there had been no criticism worthy of the name in Russia. Up to this time only "laudatory recognition" had been expressed. Karamzin in his "Moscow Journal" had attempted criticism, but, later, in his "European Messenger" abandoned the effort. The "Ladies Journal" expressed an opinion that "Criticism might dishearten our budding geniuses; they would fall and wither like spring flowers before a storm".* There were superficial imitations of the French style with nothing more substantial to offer as a model. Bestuzhev in "The Almanac" cried, "when shall we at last find our own path? When shall we write Russian direct? God alone knows."** From Prince Vyázemsky came some honest and sincere criticism. He praised Pushkin, made a real estimate of Derzhávin and Dmítriev, contributed an historical study on Von Vizin, and attacked Gogol. Nadèzhdin prophesied that out of the turmoil of Classicism, Romanticism, and imitation would come a Russian literature. Kirêevsky advocated philosophy and the advancement of learning as the groundwork of a literature natural and native.

The "real creator of Russian literary and journalistic criticism",*** was Belinsky. He has been called the Russian Lessing. He did more than any other

* A Literary History of Russia, Bruckner, p. 267

** A Literary History of Russia, Bruckner, p. 269

***A Literary History of Russia, Bruckner, p. 274.

single individual for the mental revival of Russia. His name, even at the beginning of Alexander II's reign, could not be mentioned publicly. But he was read! The young men of Russia studied him and followed him, accepting his judgment unquestioningly. Bêlinsky is the master of the fine art of teaching the Russians to read between the lines. They looked for a double meaning in everything he said. Although his message was for the masses, only the intellectuals could read him, but they were making ready to lead the masses and to take his message to them. Bêlinsky, together with Bakunin and Katkov, had been influenced by the philosophical teachings of Stankévich. For his play "Dmitri Kalinin", Bêlinsky was expelled from the University of Moscow. In the play he had exposed serfdom and criticised God and the Government. His conviction was that Russia had no literature.

Both Bêlinsky and Bakunin were carried away by one phase of Hegel's philosophy, "taking literally the proposition of the compatibility of everything actual with Reason". Because of this, Bêlinsky tried to reconcile existence to any reality, whether reasonable or not. He believed in "the illegality of all protest, the exclusive beatification of conservatism, the remoteness from the present and its cares of Art, an incarnation of the absolute: he cursed its negative tendency, Satire and Comedy, rejected the patriotic when adopted by a conquered

people; vociferated against French art because of its social character and because of the propaganda of subversive and emancipating ideas; was enthusiastic only for unconsciously creative, objective Art, that of Homer, Shakespeare and Goethe."*

Later, Bêlinsky was called to St. Petersburg, and there he underwent a great change. It became evident that his one-sided interpretation of Hegel would not work, so he turned to the French modern practice of Art as a great social force. Then he changed again to another extreme. What is the purpose of art and literature, he asks. And he answers his question by asserting that only in so far as they serve humanity, society and progress are art and literature justified. Not Art for Art's sake, but for the understanding and betterment of mankind.

During the second period of his critical evolution Bêlinsky admired and defended Gogol, encouraged Dostoevsky, Herzen and Grigorovich. He did much to stimulate interest in the older literature and encouraged the people to read Koltsóv and Lérmontov. He despised form for form's sake. He looked for the real, and when he found it he praised it. He had abandoned his youthful idealism. Art for Life's sake was now his slogan.

But he went too far. He tried to divorce life and art. He discovered in Pushkin what he had failed to observe before, a devotion to Art for Art's sake, so he

* A Literary History of Russia, Bruckner, p. 277.

attacked Puskhin. He did not work out an answer to the problem involved in a consideration of "whether beauty consists only in the correspondence of idea and form and art in the reproduction of the beautiful, and whether by his new principle art was not turned away from its proper task".* He died before he had worked out a final philosophy of art, but the effect of his criticism on Russian literature was powerful. The "social" criticism of the late nineteenth century had its beginning in the Belinsky of the forties.

Another critic who exerted a great influence on Russian letters was Alexander Herzen, (1812-1870). He was of German and Russian parentage but was French in temperament. He was grounded in the principles of French socialism. When the literary men of Russia were completely under the influence of German philosophy, Herzen remained true to his French teachings. He hated mysticism. Although he was religious his knowledge of exact science kept him from any mystical enthusiasms. In his novel "Who Is To Blame?" he voices the inaction of Russia. "We Russians", says the hero, "most frequently begin afresh, inheriting from our fathers only their property, movable and fixed, and even that we look after badly. If we wish to do anything, we find ourselves entering a boundless steppe. In all directions roads lie open to us, only when you take them you do not arrive anywhere. Such,

*A Literary History of Russia, Bruckner, p. 282.

then, is our many-sided inactivity, our busy idleness."

Herzen was exiled for six years, when he was very young, because of disrespect to Nicholas I. In 1840 he was exiled again, but obtained permission to return to Moscow. From there he went abroad, in 1847, never to return. France cured him of his Liberal illusions. He had joined Bukunin in France and lived through the Revolution of 1848. He came out of that experience in deep despair over all Western civilization. He lived in Switzerland and later in England. From London he wrote to Russia, "Here in a foreign land I am your uncensored speech, your free voice". Living outside of Russia he became one of the strongest influences in the country. His paper "The Bell" was smuggled into Russia and widely read. He asked for freedom of speech, for freedom for the peasant from the landowner, and for freedom of the tax-paying classes from political domination. The emancipation acts of 1861, 1863, and 1866, the University statute of 1863, and the judicial reform of 1864, Herzen considered just a beginning.

Under the influence of Bakunin, Herzen became more extreme. The rising in Poland in 1863 showed the Russians that Herzen's sympathies were not with Russia, and he immediately lost prestige and power.

He was a profound thinker, and perhaps one of the greatest services he rendered his country was in his manner of representing Russia abroad.

After the year 1848 a reaction set in in literature as well as in affairs, and during the next decade there was no literary production except rare flashes from Tolstoy or Turgenev. During this period all consideration of further reform was dropped. The revolutionary movements in other countries frightened the government, and it took steps to repress every individual expression in Russia. Strict censorship was enforced, the Universities were limited in their educational scope, and progressives in every field were suspected. Literature, consequently, suffered a paralyzing blow from which it did not recover until the time of Alexander II. "A whole epoch of Russian history was ended,"* and it had ended with the failure of the Crimean War, and the very evident failure of the government. "Sevastopol fell in order that 'God might reveal all the rottenness of the system of government, all the results of the principle of 'throttle'".**

After 1848 Dostoévsky and Pleshchéev were placed in disciplinary companies, Herzen left the country, and censorship had the lid on creative talent. Long drawn-out novels became the vogue. The laughter of Gogol was hushed, the realistic school was closed, and a movement was started to change the Universities into technical schools. The number of students grew smaller by a fourth. History and Logic were dished out to the hungry people by

* Russia from the Varangians to the Bolsheviks, Birkett, p.425

**Russia from the Varangians to the Bolsheviks, Birkett, p.423

ministers and theologians. All study of Old Russia was discouraged. People were punished not for offenses but for opinions. "An end was made of truth and humanity." During the last years of the reign of Alexander I every critical thought was barred from print, and "under Nicholas the Russians were altogether relieved from the burden of thinking".*

The policy of Absolutism, as Nicholas had practiced it, had failed. Attention now turned from external to internal affairs. With Alexander II censorship was relaxed, Russians could travel freely abroad, the Universities were placed on a more solid footing, the schools were opened for all who cared to study, and on March 3, 1861 was issued an act of Emancipation which freed twenty million private serfs. The actual liberation of the peasants was only a beginning, just as Lincoln's Emancipation of the negro was only a beginning. The masses had to be provided for. The Act of 1861 did not give the peasants the same rights and privileges that the rest of the people of Russia enjoyed. The government feared the turning loose of so many "souls" without some provision for their welfare, so a grant of land was given them, to be held in "perpetual possession", and for the use of it the peasant had to pay a rental fee, in money or labor, to the actual owner. The village commune, or mir,

*Bruckner, Literary History of Russia.

not a new institution in Russia, was reorganized. A peasant could, by arrangement with the government, buy his land from the owner, but so few of the peasants could obtain the price that the privilege was little used. The land allotments were small, not large enough to require the time of the peasants who tilled them, and the yield was so meager that it barely kept away starvation. The peasant was free from the personal control of the landlord, but he had almost no land. Only a clear understanding of this impossible system could show the helplessness of a peasant caught in its clutches. Nothing was his own. His little piece of land belonged to the village, and he could not sell it nor improve it. He planted what the village decreed, regardless of his own judgment. All enterprising spirit, all originality was crushed out of him. He could only cling desperately to his piece of community-owned land and sink ever deeper and deeper into poverty, starvation, and despair. The landlord was protected because he received his rental for the land whether any income was derived from it or not. The peasant was often put to desperate straits to meet the rental. In this situation lie the germs of Russia's later difficulties. If the government had given the land outright to the peasants, the revolutions of 1905, 1917, and 1918 might have been avoided, but the plan adopted led inevitably to the Bolshevik Revolution. The landlord had all the power,

and disputes between the peasant and the owner were settled by the nobility. The peasant paid too great a price for something he did not get, for he received as his own only the property rights and title to the house in which he lived. The land belonged to the mir by right of peasant purchase, and the government held the community responsible for individual liabilities. The peasant became a slave to the community, which in turn became a slave to the government. The conditions were an improvement over those existing in the sixteenth century, however. At that time the people were so oppressed and ground down that they lacked the vitality to resist. Under the new regime they dreamed of revolt.

In 1863 and 1866 the crown, or state, serfs were given their freedom with more generous settlements of land.

"The reforms produced an enormous change in Russian life, and opened many new channels to ambitious and vigorous men, who, under the preceding régime would most probably have turned to writing verse or fiction. The new law-courts demanded large numbers of educated and civilized workers. The rapid growth of capitalistic enterprises attracted numerous workers, and the number of engineers was many times multiplied. The rise of revolutionary theories made science fashionable and attractive. The whole atmosphere became freer and more propitious for

every kind of intellectual activity.....The immediate effect on literature of the liberal reforms of Alexander II was a shortage of new hands."*

The greatest short story writer of Russia was Anton Chekhov, (1860-1904). Unfortunately too many persons know him only through his play "The Cherry Orchard." Much that is thoroughly Chekhovian appears in that play, but it is not as representative as a number of his short stories would be. Chekhov, knowing early in life that he had tuberculosis, and having an analytical and introspective mind, saved himself from the tragedy of suicide only through his sense of humor.

Just here it seems necessary to say a word about the Russian sense of humor. We have come to expect reaction in artistic temperaments; we are not surprised that Mark Twain had moods of black depression. It would not be reasonable for any one to be funny all the time. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that the Russians are forever gazing at life through the masque of tragedy. They have a delightful sense of humor! When Gogol wants to tell us how pleased the tailor was with the cloak he had made for the little petty official, he does it in this way: "Petrovich, (the tailor), did not neglect to observe that it was only because he lived in a narrow street and had no signboard, and had known Akaky Akakiyevich so long,

*Contemporary Russian Literature, Prince D.E. Mirsky, p.p. 5 & 6

that he had made it so cheaply. Akakiyevich did not care to argue the point with Petrovich. He paid him, thanked him, and set out at once in his new cloak for the department. Petrovich followed him, and pausing in the street, gazed long at the cloak in the distance, after which he went to one side expressly to run through a crooked alley, and emerge again into the street beyond to gaze once more upon the cloak from another point, namely, directly in front." This humor of the Russians is not farce. It is a humor from the heart, and the more precious because it is so. "The laughter of Comedy is impersonal and of unrivalled politeness, nearer a smile; often no more than a smile. It laughs through the mind, for the mind directs it; and it might be called the humor of the mind", says George Meredith. He was speaking of the Comic Spirit as we find it in Russian Literature, especially in the writings of Gogol and Chekhov.

Chekhov was born in Taganarok, in the Ukraine, in 1860. Zamyatin in an excellent biographical sketch of Chekhov,* explains how he was indeed a son of the soil. His pedigree was purely peasant. In 1841, twenty years before the abolition of serfdom, Chekhov's grandfather bought the freedom of his family and became a steward on the estates of Count Platov. Chekhov's father, a shopkeeper, brought his children up in strict fear of God and

*The Life and Letters of Anton Chekhov, Edited by S.S. Koteliansky and Philip Tomlinson.

rigid observance of all church laws. The usual reaction followed, and in maturity Anton wrote, "I have no religion now". However as a literary man he owed much to this early training. His father had formed a choir of his five sons and instructed them in church music. The ritual and chants taught the young Chekhov the beauty of words, and gave him a keen sensitiveness to the power of the Russian language. Early in his youth Chekhov showed unusual ability as a story-teller. It was this ability that won for him his first opportunity to do literary work. The family fortunes were wrecked, and at the age of sixteen Chekhov was selfsupporting. In 1879 he entered the school of Medicine at the University of Moscow. Two years later he began his literary career. He found that he could make a living for himself and his family by writing humorous sketches. He was ashamed of what he called his "unliterary work", but it kept his family alive in a dark basement in Moscow. In such an atmosphere he wrote his witty stories, and at the same time carried on his work at the University of Moscow. He expresses often in his writings the regret that his manner of life gave him at this time no freedom to be alone, to think, to remove himself from life and contemplate it. When his medical studies were completed he moved, with his family, to Voskressensk, a village near Moscow. As a doctor he came in contact with hospitals, courts, military officials,and the peasants. It was through

his connection with the battery quartered at Voskressensk that he gathered material which he later used in his play, "The Three Sisters".

Not until 1885 was he able to leave the type of writing he had been forced to do and turn his talent into literature as he conceived it. He began to write for the Petersburg Gazette, and Gregorovich, a literary light of the time, took note of him. In 1886 he wrote to Chekhov, "You have real talent, a talent that puts you far above the circle of writers of the new generation". Through the "Novoye Vremya", the largest and most widely read daily, Chekhov was able to reach a higher literary level and a greater public. He abandoned his "funny story", wrote under his own name, and began to have faith in himself. In 1888 his story "The Steppe" was published in the best monthly of the time, and he was sought after by editors. After the publication of "In Twilight", and "Gloomy People", he was granted the award of the Pushkin prize by the Academy of Sciences.

With success in the literary world there came some relief from financial bardens, but there came also a knowledge of failing health. Removing from Moscow to the country he interested himself in the practice of medicine, in building schools at his own expense, and writing stories. "Ward Number Six", "The Black Monk", "My Life", "Murder", and "Mouzhiks" were written at this time.

The peasants had occupied a place in literature before Chekhov's time, but he gave them a new treatment. He showed the Russian village just as it was, stripped of sentimentality and trappings. He wrote the truth with merciless directness. No one after him was so fearless except Gorki and Bunin. He was interested in all classes and conditions of people. Peasant, merchant, priest, professional man, scholar, military officer, soldier, government official, Gentile or Jew, man, woman, or child--Chekhov knew them all. "His material is only delimited by humanity".

After reading a number of Chekhov's stories the persons in them stand out so clearly in your mind that you find yourself wondering whether they might not be persons you have seen and heard and known, rather than people out of a book. "The Darling" in the story by that name is unlike anyone else. She has no separate existence of her own, but speaks the language, thinks the thoughts, feels the feelings of the man - or men - she loves. When life moved onward, and there was no longer any man in whom to live, she existed - as a shell without a soul. But a little child came by, needing love, and the Darling, taking him to her useless self, sunk herself in the boy as she had lost herself in her loves. Becoming a mere reflection of the child she found herself happy again.

Chekhov once said, "People passed before me with their loves, clear days followed dark nights, nightingales sang, the hay was fragrant, and all these things, dear, wonderful in memory, passed away, disappeared, leaving no trace, vanished like mist. Where is it all?" These lines suggest the delicate beauty of Chekhov's thought--a thought which he expresses in crisp, yet musical language.

His power of condensation is remarkable. Material that most writers would weave into a long novel Chekhov disposes of in a short story. "There is magic in the way he draws a picture in a few simple lines." Eichenwald, the Russian critic, said of him, "It is impossible and it were sinful to analyze thread after thread, the precious fabric of Chekhov's work; such an operation would destroy the very fabric as if you were to blow away the gold dust from the wings of a butterfly. The content of Chekhov's works cannot be told at all; one has to read them. Reading Chekhov means to drink his lines, to be afraid of omitting a word, for every word contains an artistic view-point, some striking personification of nature or a wonderful detail of human character."

All literary aspirants should read "Hush!" It is the story of a man who is bitten by the creative bee and has to write! He comes home late at night, wakes his wife and orders tea--and possibly beefsteak--and quiet!

For he has an idea and is going to write! The child of the house calls for a drink of water. "Hush!" says the mother, "Papa is writing! Hush!" The cook begins to snore and has to be hushed. At three o'clock in the morning he wakes his wife again and orders more tea. "He writes until four, and would go on until six but he has exhausted his subject. This coquetting and showing off before inanimate objects, where he is far from prying indiscreet eyes, his despotism and tyranny in the little ant's nest over which fate has given him authority, these are for him the spice of life. How little this despot at home resembles the puny, humble, speechless, incapable being we are in the habit of seeing in the offices of the newspapers!

"I am so tired that I don't think I shall be able to sleep!" he says as he goes to bed. "Our work, this infernal, thankless drudgery of a galley-slave does not tire the body so much as the mind. I must take some drops of bromide. Oh, Heaven knows if it weren't for my family I'd throw over the whole thing! Oh, 'tis awful to have to write to order like this.

"He falls into a profound and wholesomeslumber and sleeps until one or two o'clock in the afternoon. Oh, how much longer he would have slept, what dreams he would have dreamed, had he been a famous author, or an editor, or even a publisher!

"'He was writing all night,' whispers his wife

with a frightened face. 'Hush!' No one dares speak or walk or make a sound. His sleep is sacred, and whoever is guilty of disturbing it would have to pay dearly. 'Hush!' is wafted through all the rooms, 'Hush!'"

"Agatha" is a strange and powerful study. Savka, a handsome indolent tramp, has a strange fascination for women. They pursue him. Agatha, the faithful but restless young wife of one of the villagers, is a victim. She follows Savka, and in defiance stays with him until the dawn breaks. Coldly but very dramatically Savka and the narrator watch the girl return across the shallow river to her waiting husband. "Agatha stepped out onto the bank and started across the fields to the village. At first she walked boldly, but emotion and terror soon had their way with her, she looked back fearfully and stopped, panting.

""She is frightened," Savka smiled sadly, with his eyes on the bright green ribbon that stretched across the dewy grass behind Agatha. 'She doesn't want to go on. Her husband has been standing there waiting for her for an hour. Do you see him?'

"Savka smiled as he spoke the last words, but my heart stood still. In the road, near one of the huts on the out-skirts of the village, stood Jacob, with his eyes fixed on his returning wife. He did not stir from one spot, but stood as still as a post. What were his thoughts as he

looked at her? What words had he prepared to receive her with? Agatha stood still for some time, then went on. Never have I seen any one, whether drunk or sober, walk with such a gait. Agatha seemed to be writhing under her husband's gaze. First she zigzagged, and then stopped and tramped the ground in one spot, throwing out her arms, her knees bending under her, and then staggered back. After she had gone a hundred paces she looked back once more and sat down. I looked at Savka. His face was pale and drawn with that mixture of pity and aversion that men feel at sight of a suffering animal.

"Suddenly Agatha jumped up, threw back her head, and advanced with firm footsteps toward her husband."

"The Robbers" is one of Chekhov's most vivid, colorful stories. A young doctor's assistant, lost in a snow storm, finds his way to an Inn. The old woman who owns the Inn is absent and her daughter is entertaining two peasants. The doctor's assistant does not feel very welcome, and so decides to show off before the peasants. He invents great lies of terrible adventure, but the peasants know that he is lying, and they despise him. Finally the girl helps one of them to steal the horse of the doctor's assistant. During the evening there is a vivid description of a Russian dance.

"But now, at last, Liubka came in. She was a young girl of twenty, bare foot and in a red dress. She cast a side-long glance at the doctor and crossed the room

twice from corner to corner, not walking but simply mincing. She opened a chest and took out first a cotton dress with red and blue spots, then another with flounces that rustled and crackled like paper, and lastly a handkerchief shot with the colors of the rainbow.

"Kalashikoff tuned a balalaika and began to play, and the doctor's assistant could not for the life of him make out whether the tune were merry or sad ----. Merik suddenly jumped up, beat on the floor with his iron-shod boots, and then, spreading his arms, crossed the room on his heels, from the table to the stove and from the stove to the chest. Here he leaped up as if he had been stung, clapped his feet in the air, dropped down, and sitting on his heels danced helter-skelter across the floor. Liubka waved both arms, gave a despairing shriek and followed after him. She danced side ways at first, stealthily, as if trying to steal upon him and hit him from behind; then she drummed with her heels, spun round like a top, and dropped down so that her red dress floated about her like a bell. Merik danced toward her, crouching on his heels, as if longing to destroy her with his terrible feet, but she jumped up, threw back her head, and waving her arms as a great bird flaps its wings, flew about the room hardly touching the floor. Merik looked as if every instant his arms and legs would fly off. But now he struck the floor for the last time with his heel and stopped as if struck

by lightning. Liubka leaned against him and clutched him as if he had been a post. He threw his arms around her, and looking into her eyes said, tenderly and softly, 'I'm going to find where the old woman keeps her money, and then I'll kill her and cut your little throat with a knife and set fire to the Inn. Every one will think you were burned to death and I'll take your money and go to Kuban, and there I'll herd horses and keep sheep.'

"Liubka looked wistfully at Merik and said, 'Is it nice in Kuban, Merik?'"

The long list of Chekhov's stories presents a different picture with each change of title. Beautiful nature descriptions are to be found in "The Night Before Easter", "Champagne", "Overseasoned", "The Man on the Case", and "Dreams". Chekhov makes much use of the stars, seeing them always as a blessing to mankind. "The Steppe" is the story of the uneventful travel of a peasant boy through the "flat monotonous fields", but it gives a beautiful lyrical expression of atmosphere. The appealing simplicity of such a story as "Little Jack" shows Chekhov as a master of effect. The story is so simply told that one is unconscious of the delicate art of the teller. Prostitution is the theme of "The Fit", while in "The House With the Mezzanine" he suggests a cure for social diseases. "The Gooseberry Bush" is a tale of poverty and drunkenness, showing the struggle of the beastly weak against the strong

and idle. In "My Life" he deals with Tolstoy's philosophy. "Murder", "Mouzhiks", and "In the Ravine" deal with the peasant problem.

The literature of the first period reached its climax in Chekhov.

His final belief was in man, and in The Kingdom of Eternal Truth.

"The great social upheaval produced by the Emancipation of the serfs, and other Reforms of the first half of Alexander II's reign, dealt a mortal blow to the economic welfare of the class that had, up to that time, monopolized all literary culture--the landed gentry. Its middle strata, which were intellectually the most active, suffered most from the blow. A new class arose to replace them,--the Intelligentsia. The origin of the class was composite. It absorbed many members of the ruined gentry, but the groundwork consisted of men risen from the lower, or rather outer classes, that had not previously taken part in modern civilization.....Revolt against all tradition was the only watchword of the class."* "The Revolution of 1905, in so far as it was a conscious effort to attain definite ends, was entirely the result of the development of the revolutionary ideas of the intelligentsia."** One outstanding personality in that group was Chernyshevski, who has been called the greatest Russian nihilist.

*Contemporary Russian Literature, Mirsky, p.5.

**Mirsky, p.97.

He followed in the footsteps of Bêlinsky and Herzen. His book "What Is To Be Done?", showing up the misery of Russian life, stirred the Intellectuals. He was the first professional revolutionist. He believed that a political revolution must precede a social one. He was arrested, convicted on false charges, in 1862, and sent to Siberia. He became a martyr, and after his death he exerted an influence more powerful than he had wielded in his life.

The rise of Marxism about 1884, with Lenin as one of the original leaders, marks an important stage in the development of the Intelligentsia. It "freed the student of political science from the blinkers of a too narrow idealism".* Marxism also "developed exclusive class morality, divorcing politics from ethics".** Plekhanov, the chief exponent of Russian Marxism, was one of the most powerful members of the Intelligentsia. The Marxists grew into the Social Democratic Party of Russia, and were opposed by the Populists, who, in turn, became the Socialist Revolutionaries. The Social Democrats believed in strikes and mass action, but not in a policy of terrorism. In 1903 this party split into two factions, the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks, but their policy was much the same and there was little actual difference between them until the Great War. The Socialist Revolutionaries, made up largely of impetuous youths, carried on a

*Mirsky, p. 99.

**Mirsky, p. 99.

program of political assassinations. Bakunin, Russia's notorious advocate of anarchism, was the inspiration of this group. Both Bakunin and Marx believed that capitalism was a dangerous menace to Russia, but they did not agree as to how a change should be brought about. The Marxists, believed that state capital should replace private capital, but Bakunin objected, seeing private ownership preferable to state. He had faith in the Mir, in the power of the social unit, but he saw the bullet, not the ballot, as the best means to that end. Marx was a scientist, Bakunin a hot-headed adventurist. Bakunin idolized the peasant, and preached "the creativeness of the unloosed masses". To free the masses he was willing to destroy everything.

Another party, the Liberals, grew in power. At first it closely resembled socialism and later grew into the Constitutional Democrats.

Terrorism came to a standstill after the assassination of Alexander II. Nothing was gained by the act and many Terrorists were sent to Siberia. Pobedonostsev, a fanatical reactionary controlled the government until 1905. He was an exact opposite of Bakunin. He attacked democracy and Western culture as a disease, calling Parliament an "institution for plundering the people", freedom of the press a farce, and education for the masses a huge mistake. His reactionary influence lasted through the reign of

Alexander III, and into the reign of Nicholas II. Russia as a nation was policed, and in the grip of autocratic power. Secret agents were everywhere, and the people lived in fear and terror. The secret police, the Okhrona, became so powerful that it was a menace to the state itself. "The tail wagged the dog." All public gatherings were forbidden, there was no trial by jury, half of Russia was kept under a state of siege by the police, strict censorship was enforced, all educational efforts were confined to religious matters, schools were suppressed, and the government determined what the masses should think about." At this time there were in Russia thirty thousand Zemstov schools, carried on largely by individual support, and eighteen thousand church schools. It was Pobedonostsev's policy to cut down the number of Zemstov schools and increase the parochial schools.

There were revolts, strikes, and uprisings, followed by vigorous punishment. The cry of the peasant was, "the land for those who labor!". The Socialist wanted "self-determination of the peoples". Such a policy if put into effect would mean the dissolution of the Russian Empire. Nationality was strong in the great body of Russians, and they rallied to the support of the government to prevent such a dissolution. The tragic failure of the war with Japan aided the Socialists in their program. The returned soldiers were ready to attack the government. The government,

realizing its danger, made sudden arrests, among them the head of the Soviet. The Soviets then called upon the people to refuse to pay taxes, but again the government won. The spirit of the Revolution was gone.

Count Leo Tolstoy quotes the Russian poet, Tutcheff, as saying that "one cannot understand Russia by the mind or reason; one can only have faith in her", and adds that the Intellectuals were fond of repeating this aphorism, seeing in it an excuse for all Russia's shortcomings and the calamities that overtook the nation. He sees the failure of the Intellectuals in the fact that they made the people conscious of a great wrong, but gave them no remedy; implanted in their minds a vague hope, but showed them no way to achieve it.

"If the intellectual class of Russia, liberal as it was in its beliefs and actuated by high political ideals, had ever worked out a unified and practical program for the benefit of the people to whose aspirations it professed to be devoted, it could have averted the deluge which engulfed it together with the rest of the nation. To-day we find the intelligentsia of old Russia scattered to the four corners of the world, swept away by the same hurricane that crumbled the political life of a great country and leaving a nation almost barren of an entire class which for centuries had been thought to be its intellectual bulwark.

"That significant fact raises a question of political and psychological interest: If a great nation can in a few years practically exterminate its intellectuals and replace them with a group of politicians, of what value, then, were the famous Russian intelligentsia to the nation, so weak that it could neither prevent nor stop the revolt of its people? The answer is obvious. That value, in its political sense, was nil.

"A man struggling in the water and about to go down needs something more than dispassionate advice from philosophers on the river bank. Russia's intellectuals, when not disputing among themselves on what could be done to save the drowning man or speculating on his prospects of reaching the shore, threw out to him life-lines of cob-web. They wove their finely spun theories while the peasants struggled on.

"This great instability of the intellectual leaders, their lack of a common program, their failure to work out and unite on a political doctrine suitable for the nation, and the feebleness of their disjointed efforts helped bring on the chaos which their gifts and position of influence could have averted. The fact that the intellectual class, with tremendous influence at its command, failed to use that influence wisely or rise to its opportunities heightens the tragedy of the Revolution."*

*The Outlook, February 23, 1927.

Count Tolstoy accuses the Intellectuals of being not only anti-political but also anti-religious. He sees the Russian people left without any faith and without any sort of political program. It is natural that from the pen of the son of the great Tolstoy we should have a bitter attack of any department of literature that destroyed every phase of idealism.

After the Revolution of 1905 the ban of censorship was lifted, the daily press became powerful, and for the first time in Russia it was possible to divorce politics and literature. The most important result of the revolution was the establishing of a Parliament, the Duma. The years immediately following the suppression of the Revolution saw a growth of individualism, and aestheticism, a new interest in problems of sex, and a revived interest in religion.

How any literature could come out of such chaos as Russian history records from the middle nineties to 1917, is amazing. Surely such dramatic events were excellent background for literary effort, but how, from the midst of such black dispair, any creative genius dared raise his head, we cannot tell.

The literature of the period is a reflection of the time. The peasant looms large, but the centre of attention, following the lead of the modernists, turns toward the city. The village, however, is seen to offer new and interesting material for study. It seems to provide the Russian character.

The writers of this period had to write about the Revolution. They could not escape it. The nineteenth century writers suffered from the monotony of life, and their great purpose was to stir to action a lethargic nation. But the twentieth century found itself breathless in the midst of too much activity. The result was too much writing and too little art. The reaction of the Revolutionary period expressed itself in questions. It asked the meaning of life, questioned every fundamental of society, of humanity, of the universe. What did an ideal mean? Was there an eternal moral law? Was human life sacred when it stood in the way of happiness for many? Was a fight for freedom inspired by a religious emotion, or by material greed?

The rise of capitalism after the reforms of Alexander II, had given new impetus to journalism, and gradually the daily paper developed into a political organ.

The Symbolists came to the front with a cry for spiritual regeneration of mankind, and mystic moods and movements became the vogue. This religious mood, with the Symbolists at one extreme and the Socialists at the other, deeply colored Russian literature after 1906.

"Between 1900 and 1910 Russian literature was divided into two distinct and mutually watertight parts,--the Gorki-Andreev school on the one side, and the Symbolists with their following on the other. The Gorki-Andreev school are the successors of the old Intelligentsia, who had lost much of the ethical education of the old

radicals, and acquired nothing in return beyond a 'craving void' of pessimism and unbelief."*

Individualism received less attention, but carefully considered, it spelled nihilism. "Fortunately for Russia it was more pronounced in literature than in life."** "By 1910 the work of the Gorki-Andreev school was done."***

The purely mechanical reason for the tide of literature dealing with sex problems which flooded the country was the lifting of the ban of censorship after the Revolution. Censorship in Russia up to 1906 had been most severe, and when the gates were opened the flood poured in. The hectic, turbulent, disorganised condition of life, the inflamed imaginations, the relaxing of mental effort, the dispair and hopelessness of the people, all contributed to the unnatural importance in literature of an emphasis on the baser side of life. Fortunately the duration of the enthusiasm was brief. Andreev and Kuprin were caught in it, but they differed from the others in that they approached this delicate problem seriously, making it a soul-searching matter.

Another element of change was in the reading public. The twentieth century brought an increase in number. In recent times, in all countries, a writer faces a heterogeneous audience. The intellectuals and the untutored read. Popular success is easier to gain by catering

* Contemporary Russian Literature, Mirsky, pp.105-106

** Russian Literature, Olgin.

***Contemporary Russian Literature, Mirsky, pp.106.

to the popular taste, even in Russia! Less attention was given to style, writers increased, but literature was popularized. The Realists wrote in a different mood, and on different subjects from the Symbolists, but their method was the same. The Realists were expressionistic, producing vivid pictures with little detail. They wrote in an accelerated style unknown to the leisurely authors of the old school. This momentum is indicated by the fact that the Literary Monthly was supplanted by daily papers, pamphlets, almanacs, and tracts. Critics increased until there were as many critics as writers. But the critics, in spite of their number, were sincere and able.

A leading American magazine in 1925 had an announcement which read, "Maxim Gorki, the greatest living Russian writer, has done an arresting piece of work in a story called "The Hermit". The story is full of humor and pathos, with a touch of the sublime and a broad stroke of the ludicrous." These qualities are to be found in most of Gorki's stories. One of his countrymen, an able critic, in writing of him says, "He came like a laughing boy into the midst of solemn mournful men. He was like a sky-rocket." This "sky-rocketing" of Gorki's makes for variableness. He is not always true. Some of his characters are too clever, too self-conscious. Too often the wit is the wit of Gorki, not of the Russian peasant pictured. But Gorki was bold, and daring, and thrilling with a restless rebellion.

The drama of Gorki "that approaches greatness does so not by reason of his crude naturalism, but in so far as the influence of Nietzschean thought lifts it above the Slavish realism of much of his work".* "Greater than life is power," said Nietzsche. "Why live at all", said Gorki, "if we are robbed of power?" The greatness of "The Lower Depths" lies in the fact that, "amid the misery of the night shelter, the preaching of Satine creates a vision of the future in the outcasts of the streets".

Gorki was ahead of his time. He fortold the Revolution and prophesied the upsetting of established things. He took an active part in the Revolution, supporting the Bolsheviks. But about 1905 the times had caught up with him and passed him. His remarkable popularity had begun to wane. He was no longer a prophet. Then it was that Gorki turned his gaze backward toward old Russia and found it more interesting than contemporary life. He shows old Russia through the eyes of "present understanding". He throws into literature the fiendish brutality, the misshapen ugliness, the savagery of old Russia, but he shows, too, her indomitable strength and feverish desire for spiritual regeneration. The chord which he sounds longest and loudest, and into which all his different notes harmonize themselves, is the longing of "a mute soul to become articulate". Much of this is a reflection of Gorki's own need.

*Modern Drama In Europe, Storm Jameson, p. 14.

He had no patience, he could not wait for the natural course of affairs. He is elemental, of the people, and his writings are of the people, not about them. Although after 1910 his time of great popularity in Russia had passed, his work gradually penetrated to the masses and he was an influence to be reckoned with in 1917.

He constructs a poetry of vivid prose. Observe how he describes a forest blazing: "At the roots of the trees merry little flames ran along like squirrels, flourishing their red tails, while a low blue smoke crept over the ground. One could see how well the playful fire climbed on to the bark of the trunks, twined itself around them, hiding away somewhere; and then, behind it, the golden ants came crawling, while the green lichen became first gray then black. Now the fire appeared again from somewhere and began to gnaw at the rusty grass and low shrubs, then hid again, and suddenly a whole crowd of quick red little beasts appeared scurrying and bustling among the roots." This description, taken from "The Fragments", of Gorki's diary, shows his poignant, thrilling description. He shows his peculiar power to write of the picturesqueness of landscape, which every Russian writer learned from Gogol, as for example "Night had fallen. Dull stars shone in the watery blue of the sky. The fragment of moon had disappeared. The low emaciated pine that grew close to us had become dark and reminded me of a monk."

The story which "places Gorki among the true classics of Russian literature" is "Twenty-six Men and a Girl". It is a tale of sordid realism, lifted and made beautiful by a poetic power and faith in beauty and nobility. The twenty-six men in the story toil for sixteen hours a day in an underground bakery. A young girl comes every day for bread. She is the only light and beauty that comes into their lives. They have such faith in her innocence and goodness that they are willing to wager with a soldier who boasts that he can seduce the girl, never dreaming that the soldier might win the wager. When he does they refuse to see the girl again. To them she represented all goodness, and when she has fallen there is no longer goodness and beauty, only the sordidness of their daily routine.

Quaint and individual are the stories, "Her Lover", and "One Autumn Night". In the former a servant girl invents a lover, then begs a student to write her letters to him. But it is all a tragedy of the lonely starved life of the servant girl. Gorki concludes the story with this bit of discussion: "The fallen classes, we say, and who are the fallen classes I should like to know? They are, first of all, people with the same bones, flesh and blood and nerves as ourselves. We have been told this day after day for ages. And we actually listen, and the devil only knows how hideous the whole thing is. Or are we completely depraved by the loud sermonising of humanism? In reality we also are fallen

folks, and so far as I can see, very deeply fallen into the abyss of self-sufficiency and the conviction of our own superiority. But enough of this. It is all as old as the hills, so old that it is a shame to speak of it, very old indeed--yes, that's what it is!"

In Gorki realism is strongly mixed with romanticism. His early reading of such imported literature as "The Castle of Otranto" influenced the romantic temperament that marks him a typical son of Russia. I think it was James Gibbons Huneker who said of Gorki that he shook his fist at God with one hand, and crossed himself with the other.

So different is the voice of Gorki, "the bitter", the man sprung from the people, the embodiment of all the accumulated wrath and indignation of centuries of social wrong and appression, from the gentlemanly tones of the cultured artist Turgenev!

His position as the champion of culture rather than as an active force in Bolshevism in 1917 was not an attractive one, but by maintaining a rather neutral ground he succeeded in doing his country a distinct service, "Everything that was done between 1918 and 1921 to save the writers and other higher intellectuals from starvation was due to Gorki.....His great place in modern Russian letters is entirely due to his personal part in the salvaging of Russian civilization when it was in danger of going down."*

*Contemporary Russian Literature, Mirsky, p.111.

The healthy vigor of Gorki contrasts startlingly with the work of his contemporary and friend, Andreev (1871-1919). One of Andreev's own phrases expresses him,--"Amid the flowers of a beautiful earth they have erected a madhouse". The mist of horror is ever before Andreev's eyes. To him there is no possibility of freedom for the individual;"Man's passions are the abysmal brute that lurks in the depths of the human soul; thought is a dangerous weapon; all men are slaves; walls surround on every side; religiou is a questionable thing; God is a myth". "He who guards the Entrance speaks in the language of silence," says Andreev. In this man we find an example of the too suddenly awakened intellectual, for "he lacked culture as much as he despised it".* His mind grasped more than his reason could understand. Yet we find in him a strange, shy beauty. He is tender in his love of life and youth.

"Andreev proceeded from a scientific agnosticism and was a stranger to all mystical optimism--his was an all-around and absolute pessimism, a pessimism of death as well as of life. It may be said, in short, that while the Symbolists proceed from Dostoevsky, Andreev proceeds from Tolstoy. The negation of culture and the intense consciousness of the elemental realities of life--death and sex--are the essence of Tolstoyism, and reappear in the philosophy of Andreev."**

*Contemporary Russian Literature, Mirsky, p. 131

**Contemporary Russian Literature, Mirsky, p. 131.

"The Wall", his first metaphysical story, is the story of a wall that stands between the lepers and the unknown which lures them with an irresistible force. In vain they try to crush it, or climb over it. But as they perish in ineffectual effort, the wall stands solid and silent. It is not hard to see Andreev's meaning. "The Abyss", and "In the Fog", deal with the brute force of sex passion over-mastering pure and innocent human beings. The appearance of these two tales shocked the conservative reading public by their ultra-frank treatment of sex. Of his shorter stories "Lazarus" is the most haunting and terrible. A man who has been for three days and nights in the mystery of death, returns. He cannot tell what he has seen, but he exerts an influence of evil. Those who look into his eyes see something there that maddens them. He blasts hope and beauty. Two young lovers trying to cheer the grim dark man call out to him to laugh with them in their love. "And Lazarus looked at them, and their love became mournful and gloomy. Hurled by fathomless life-forces into each other's arms, they mingled their kisses with tears, their joy with pain and only succeeded in realising the more vividly a sense of their slavery to the silent nothing. Forever united, forever parted, they flashed like sparks, and like sparks went out in boundless darkness." Lazarus had discovered that life

was a mockery, a jest, but a pitiful one. Finally Augustus orders Lazarus' eyes to be burnt out that the fire of them might no longer parch and wither all they look upon. In the end the blind man walks into the "swollen crimson" of the sun never to return.

Andreev, more than any other Russian writer, makes us conscious of the irresistible, compelling force called Destiny. There is always present in his stories the dread of the Unknown. His characters are not real persons, but are symbols, although Andreev is not a Symbolist. His ghastly story, "The Red Laugh", is a mockery of the absurdity of war. Shakhnoski has said that the influence of Edgar Allan Poe is clearly seen in Andreev's stories. But he seems to overtake Poe, and go far beyond him when horror is the objective. He has emotion and sympathy as well as the ability to construct in logical and systematic style. "The Seven That Were Hanged" transcends technique. It differs from his other work in that it is not a bitter revolt against death, but a tribute to the Revolutionists who were hanged. It is written in a simple and direct style quite different from Andreev's usual rhetorical manner.

In his purely dramatic work he reaches his highest achievement. In "The Life of Man", "Anathema", and "The Black Maskers" he uses a powerful symbolism.

Andreev believed in nothing. Only horror and madness were real. All society was based on lies, all hope in a life to come was delusion. But in spite of his policy of negation he stands as "the most representative man of a dark and tragic phase in the evolution of the Intelligentsia, when, losing faith in its naive revolutionary optimism, it suddenly found itself in the universal void--naked men, solitary and empty, on a meaningless earth under a cold and empty sky".*

It is a decided relief, after Andreev, to come to the healthy, normal sanity of Alexander Kuprin. Born in 1870, he attained the full dignity of authorship in 1910.

Kuprin, like his contemporaries, is a decidedly unequal writer: he soars and he sinks. His range carries him from the exquisite beauty of "The Garden of the Holy Virgin" to the horror of "The Pit". He is holy and he is flat. A part of his philosophy is found in the closing words of his novel "The Duel". He closes it with these words: "Ah, a time will come when there shall be no longer slaves and masters; no maimed or cripples; no malice, no vices, no pity, no hate. Men shall be Gods. How shall I dare to deceive, insult or ill-treat another man in whom I see and feel my fellow, who, like myself, is a God? Then, and then only, shall life be rich and Beautiful. Our daily life shall be a pleasurable tale,

*Contemporary Russian Literature, Mirsky, p. 139.

an enfranchised science, a wonderful music, an everlasting merry-making. Love, free and sovereign, shall become the world's religion."

"The Horse-Thieves" is a powerful story in which the mob madness of the Revolution is handled superbly. The characterization is remarkable. No greater contrast could be found than that existing between "The Horse-Thieves" and "The Garden of the Holy Virgin". Lacking plot, this beautiful piece of literary art satisfies with style.

A beautiful and vital love of life permeates Kuprin's work. He approaches the heroic. He tells with freshness and clarity stories of love and adventure filled with action and intrigue. He admired Kipling and Jack London. His optimism presents a delightful contrast to the neurasthenic, pallid work of some of his contemporaries. Tenderness, love of children, love of nature, love of health, and cleanness of mind and body; idealism that is practical; belief in love that is pure and holy, and stronger than death; faith in the power of good to conquer--these are the characteristics of Kuprin's genius. He comes like a clean cool wind from the sea, blowing upon the fevered face of Russian literature.

Gorki, in a spirit of revolt, cries out against inactive pessimism, the will-less philosophy of old Russia, and his cry is taken up by his contemporary, Artsybashev.

As a moral anarchist he has no equal. He was a sufferer from tuberculosis, as was Chekhov, but while Chekhov accepted his affliction with a passive sadness, Artsybashev cursed in terror and bitterness the thing that was destroying him. The men in his stories destroy wantonly, with gigantic strength. His women, contrary to the usual Russian conception, are weak and helpless.

Artsybashev is honest and unafraid. He has a burning contempt for convention and tradition. His greatest character, "Sanin", expounds a philosophy altogether Nietzchean. Christianity is his foe because its teachings are contrary to natural instincts, and anything that gets between man and his desires must, according to Artsybashev, be destroyed. Unlike Kuprin, he has no idealism; life is never transcended; love is beastly and sensual; self-assertion at any price is advocated, and the "cult of the flesh is glorified". Undoubtedly Artsybashev exerted a harmful influence, for he was widely read in Russia, especially by young people, who took his teachings very seriously.

There are other writers of this later group, such as Garshin, who died in the early years of his promise, and Bunin, who is a great literary artist best known for his novel "The Village". His best known short stories are "The Devil's Beggar", "The Cup of Life", "A Spring Evening", and "A Night Conversation".

"The Symbolists were the pioneers of a new culture which, though one-sided and imperfect, infinitely widened and enriched the Russian mind and made the Intelligentsia at once more European and more national."* "Russian Symbolism is a part of the general cultural upheaval which changed the face of Russian civilization between 1890 and 1910. It was at once an aesthetic and a mystical movement."**

Edgar Allan Poe was the greatest single outside influence in this movement. The Russians approached mysticism in their symbolism by "making it a philosophy". "They actually saw the universe as a system of symbols. Everything was significant to them not by itself only, but as the reflection of something else."*** In their poetry the Symbolists reached artistic attainment, writing verse "inferior only to the first golden age of Russian poetry--the age of Pushkin".**** The philosophy of Nietzsche was finding expression in the sublimation of self. "Anarchism posed as self-assertion". The study of self, the introspective analysis of mind and states of soul, produced a peculiar literary form. The aggressive strength of individualism was not yet on its feet. The ego was awaking, inspecting itself, questioning. As a result we have a period in which shadows move dimly in an uncertain light, groping, searching, but never quite attaining.

* Contemporary Russian Literature, Mirsky, p.106

** Contemporary Russian Literature, Mirsky, p. 81

*** Contemporary Russian Literature, Mirsky, p.183

**** Contemporary Russian Literature, Mirsky, p.183.

When a writer is in a fog of doubt and unbelief, when the solid earth has given way beneath his feet, when he must go down into the deep abyss, we find him emerging finally, if he succeeds in saving himself, with a dearly bought serenity, a far vision, an ultimate outlook! Such is the symbolism of August Strindberg; such is, in part, the symbolism of Henrik Ibsen. But there is a less mighty form of symbolic writing, when symbols are used not as the only possible medium for the expression of a mystic soul, but as a vehicle for the expression of be-clouded, half-dreamed, inarticulate imaginings. Occasionally in the work of the writers of the transitional period in Russia, we find a touch of the higher symbolism, approaching mysticism, but these dreamers seldom get beyond the stage of mistiness. As seers and mystics they are small of stature. They are not romanticists, certainly, nor are they true realists.

The period represented by the Symbolists is more interesting than the writers themselves. Without doubt the men coming after this period received greater literary inspiration from it than did those who are called representatives of it. The growing complexity of life, the last convulsive grip of an archaic political system, the overthrow of the aristocrat and the new power vested in the intellectual, professional, and business man, found expression in a convulsive state of fermentation. The new forces boiled and steamed, but the lid of the old order was held on by the

chains of absolutism. But new wine was in the making and new bottles must be had., The new bottles were made, over a new pattern, by the Symbolists, a group unnoticed at first, but later wielding a distinct influence. They never allowed themselves to become a part of any other group, but remained always distinct.

The men in this group, of whom Feodor Sologub is most noteworthy, not only created but felt it their duty to explain to the public just why their work was true art. They did not allow themselves to become entangled in politics or social problems. Olgin, in "The Soul of the Russian Revolution", explains how economic misery of the masses, political chaos, brutality of Russian reality is beyond their vision. They neither love nor teach the people. They do not reform. Gogol the artist is close to their soul, but Gogol the reformer is a stranger to them. They worship Pushkin but do not follow his love of the people. Dostoevsky is of all more nearly loved by this school. It is not of the people that they write. They find the peasant dull and uninteresting as a study. They write chiefly of the cultured for the cultured. They concern themselves with harrowing soul struggles.

There is a peculiar idealism in their creed. Believing that deeds and thoughts will perish they write of fleeting emotion, believing that the idle dream, the wayward fancy will live. "Poetry", they say, "is internal

music externally expressed in rhythmic words."* They have a strong religious belief which is very definitely Christian, and their whole philosophy is ideal. Merezhkovsky, one of the group, said, "Only faith in something infinite can inflame the human soul". And they demand that the soul be free and unfettered. Human personality is supreme; man is his own law. He sees the light of the Unknown in his own way. Human institutions are a check on the soul.

The Symbolists believed that poetic inspiration came from congregated life. They lived in cities and wrote about Moscow, Petersburg, the Latin quarter of Paris, a lodging house in Venice, but never of Russian village life. These writers were educated men, having an extensive knowledge of philosophy and history. They showed the influence of Nietzsche, of Maeterlinck, and of Ibsen. But of all the foreign influences that of Poe is most marked.

The Symbolists have been accused of decadence, and justly so. In their early work especially, there was too much of beauty for beauty's sake. In their later work they are characterized by a more earnest purpose. In 1895 a critical review of "Our Symbolists" showed the attitude Russia had adopted toward her new literary fledgling. Mikhaylovsky, the critic, said in 1895, "It is my belief that if the gentlemen under discussion are maniacs and lunatics they are not genuine ones, but imposters".

*Balmont.

Perhaps no Russian writer has excited so much argumentative discussion as Feodor Sologub. He has shown ability as poet, dramatist, novelist, and short story writer. He is undoubtedly the most interesting of the Symbolic School. He comes from the lower ranks of Russian society. His father was a shoemaker and his mother was a domestic servant. He was given a fairly good education, and for a time he taught school. On the funds received from his first novel, "Medki Bes", he launched himself on a literary career. "It is not for the literary historian, but rather for the specially trained psychoanalyst, to study Sologub's writings in detail. Delight in cruelty, and in the humiliation of beauty"* are two of his distinguishing features.

Sologub is a dreamer whose dreams are sometimes uglier than reality. He worships beauty in the midst of the odor of decay. "He craves full-blooded lusty life. Yet always behind the face of youth he sees the grimace of a wrinkled hag. He longs for pure love, yet his love is always earth-bound; innocent joy degenerates into hideous sensuality."** Sologub is a realist who passes all too easily from realism to demonism.

A. G. Cornfeld says of Sologub, "Being complicated he is uniform; being crudely realistic he is an idealist; being tortuous he is simple; being intelligible he is full of riddles. He is pitiful and formidable; he says the truth when he is jesting."

* Contemporary Russian Literature, Mirsky, p. 197

** Olgin, p. 186

John Cournos, an able translator of Sologub's work, gives us a different point of view. "In studying his work", says Cournos, "one finds that he has both realism and fantasy. But while he is sometimes wholly realistic, he is seldom wholly fantastic. His fantasy has always its foundations in reality. His realism is as gray as that of Chekhov, whose logical successor he has been acclaimed by Russian criticism. Were Poe a Russian, he might have written as Sologub writes.---- Throughout his work Sologub reiterates his affection for children and the childlike. When he loves or pities an older person he endows him with childlike attributes. Here again Chekhov and Sologub meet, loving the unpractical people because they are usually more lovable personalities." Rather than have them grow up and become unlovable, Sologub makes some of his children die young. In one of his stories Rayechka, a sweet child, dies, and Mitya, a boy who liked her, muses upon her death in this fashion: "Had Rayechka lived to grow up, she might have become a housemaid like Darya, pomaded her hair, and squinted her cunning eyes."

In his story "Light and Shadows," which is a powerful and terrible story of a child who went mad making shadows on the walls, the author is undoubtedly attacking the educational system which crams the mind and

starves the imagination. The sensitive and imaginative child in the story shows the reaction of such a system. The end of the story is representative of Sologub's style:

"It is evening. A lighted lamp stood on the floor in Valodya's room. Just behind it, near the wall, sat Volodya and his mother. They were looking at the wall and were making strange movements with their hands.

"Shadows stirred and trembled upon the wall.

"Volodya and his mother understood them. Both were smiling sadly and were saying weird and impossible things to each other. Their faces were peaceful and their eyes looked clear; their joyousness was hopelessly sorrowful and their sorrow was wildly joyous.

"In their eyes was a glimmer of madness, blessed madness.

"The night was descending upon them."

"Hide and Seek" resembles this story in theme. In it a mother and daughter play at hide and seek until the game becomes an obsession with the child. She grows frail and dies. The mother, feeling that she was responsible for the tragedy, goes mad.

Perhaps the most delightful of Sologub's stories is "The Hoop". It is a very simple tale of an old man who has never known a childhood. Seeing a boy rolling a hoop, he decides that he, too, will roll a hoop. He finds an old, rusty one, and after fearful doubts goes

to a glade outside the town. "There was neither dust nor din here, and the gentle exquisite morning mist lay behind the trees. The old feet glided over the dry leaves and stumbled across the old gnarled roots. The old man broke off a dry limb and hung his hoop upon it.

"He came upon an opening, full of daylight and of calm. The dewdrops, countless and opalescent, gleamed upon the green blades of newly-mown grass.

"Suddenly the old man let the hoop slide off the stick. He struck with the stick and sent the hoop rolling across the lawn. The old man laughed, brightened at once, and pursued the hoop like that little boy. He kicked up his feet and drove the hoop with his stick, which he flourished high over his head, just as that little boy did. It seemed to him that he was small, beloved, and happy. It seemed to him that he was being looked after by his mother, who was following close behind and smiling. Like a child on his first outing, he felt refreshed on the bright grass, and on the still mosses.

"His goat-like, dust-gray beard, that harmonized with his sallow face, trembled while his cough mingled with his laughter, and raucous sounds came from his toothless mouth." The story ends in this way,--

"Dying in the factory hospital among strangers, indifferent people, he smiled serenely.

"His memories soothed him. He, too, had been a

child; he too, had laughed and scampered across the green grass, among the dark trees. His beloved mother had followed him with her eyes."

"The Search" is a psychological study of a boy's mind. "The White Mother" is also a child study. One of the most fascinating of Sologub's stories is "The Smile". It is a tender, true study of an over-sensitive boy and his pitiful smiling attempt at poise and courage. "The White Dog" is a terrible story of psychological suggestion. A woman is called a dog and it preys on her mind until she begins to believe that she is a dog. She is shot baying at the moon. "The discharge of a rifle sounded in the night air. The dog gave a groan, jumped upon its hind legs, became a naked woman, who, her body covered with blood, started to run, all the while groaning and weeping. The two men (who fired the shot), threw themselves on the grass and began to moan in wild terror."

Whether or not we like all that Sologub stands for in the new literary movement, we have to admit that there are few writers "so subtle, so insinuating, and so seductive in their power to make the reader think; few writers who give so great a stimulus to the imagination." "In general Sologub's prose is beautiful; limpid, clear, balanced, poetical, but with a keen sense of measure."*

*Contemporary Russian Literature, Mirsky, p. 20

His mind turned away from the turmoil of national life, a Parnassian aloofness is expressed by this man. From remote places of the spirit he declares, "I take a piece of life, coarse and poor, and create a sweet legend, because I am a poet. Remain stagnating thou dull commonplace life, or rage with a furious fire; over Thee, Life, I, the poet, will erect the created legend of all that is charming and beautiful." By the beauty and magic of words he created an atmosphere peculiarly his own.

It is necessary, just here, to speak of the changes that Russia was undergoing politically.

The Duma and the Emperor had been at cross purposes after 1906,. Both, however, presented programs for improving the conditions of the peasant. State and Crown lands were sold to the peasantry at reasonable prices, and credit was offered them. A systematic emigration for the settlement of Siberia was arranged. The government, fearing the power of the Duma, wished to abolish it, but dared not because of the possibility of a financial crisis if such drastic measures were taken. Stolypin, the driving force in the government, opposed revolution, and urged legality in dealing with public affairs. He assured the people that the government had "parted company forever with the old police system of administration."*

* Russia and Reform, Pares, p. 563

The voice of the people was hushed, and revolutionary out-breaks continued. Stolypin tried to suppress them but the severe sentences of the court-martial, which was established all over Russia, only fed the fires of rebellion. A sum of money voted by the Duma for the relief of famine-stricken peasants was misappropriated, and sullen disapproval of the government grew. In 1911 Stolypin was assassinated.

A new National Liberalism spread among the Intelligentsia which created a spirit of patriotism in 1914, and did much to advance the cause of the White Army in 1918.

The Revolution of 1917 began in a wave of enthusiasm, but soon lost its optimistic out-look, and became darkly pessimistic. "Many intellectuals who had nothing in common with the atheistic optimism of Lenin welcomed his Revolution in a spirit of ecstatic suicide. They hoped and believed that the old bourgeois world that had so ineffectively heaped up its mound of culture would be destroyed, and that a new mankind would be born to a new life on a new and naked earth. They believed that the destruction of material wealth, of political and economic greatness, gave more freedom to the spirit, and that the coming age would be a great age of spiritual culture..... This feeling grew and spread during the worst years of hunger, destruction, and terror."*

* Contemporary Russian Literature, Mirsky, p. 242.

The Bolsheviki held, with Marx, that no theory of capitalism can stand. But when they tried to put the theory into practice they met with unexpected difficulties. "To dispossess the aristocrat and the bourgeois and divide their goods among the poor was simple enough. But men cannot live on office desks or Empire furniture, nor even, in days of chaos, on diamonds or gold cups. When gradually the Bolsheviks began to put pressure on the peasants they were rudely disillusioned. To put the matter bluntly, the Russian peasant, with so few exceptions as to make no matter, did not care a whoop about the Bolshevik Revolution. After centuries of virtual slavery he was his own boss owning his own land. By the summer of 1918, therefore, a counter-revolution was in full swing.....and it was the Peasant Party par excellence who led the wave of reaction."*

Under Bolshevik rule Russia had begun a new system of culture through the army, making it a great school. Lenin called Russia's existing culture "semi-Asiatic crudity", and proposed education not for life but of life. Religion presented a great problem. The Tsar and God had been so closely united in the minds of the Russian peasantry, that, to them, when the Tsar passed God also passed. The church, however, due to the instinctive loyalty of the people, did not fall. The appointing of Tikof as Patriarch had filled the breach left by the removal of God's natural representative, the Tsar.

* Walter Duranty in Current History, November, 1927

Atheism was still confined to the intellectuals, not having as yet penetrated to the masses. Religion, to the Bolsheviki, was a narcotic, keeping the people quiet and submissive. It was the policy of the Bolsheviki to stir the people up, to make them act, not dream; work, not pray. Religion was no longer taught in the schools and the Bible was banned from libraries.

The famine of 1921 gave the Bolsheviki their opportunity. They siezed church treasures, mocked the Patriarch, and made an attack upon Orthodoxy from within. They were not merely iconoclasts. Their purpose was to insist upon the divinity of human rights. In an effort to appease one hundred and twenty millions of people they offered food and land and a chance to become and individual. That the peasants resented such an effort in their behalf is not strange. Had Lenin lived perhaps the plan could have been carried through with less disastrous results. However, "during 1923-24 the Bolsheviki accomplished miracles. They set their shattered currency firmly on a gold basis. They cemented their alliance with their worker supporters.....They consolidated the divers units of the old Czarist Empire into a union welded solid by full-disciplined members of their organization in all the key positions.....They set their factories and their commerce working. And they put Russia back before the world,

not as a madhouse of pestilent fanatics, but as a great and growing power, young, vigorous and eager, with a new and potent ideology to appeal to mankind, and with devotees in every land".* Controversy within the Communist Party itself is without doubt due to the loss of their leader. With Trotsky and the other Opposition leaders opposing Stalin and the administration of the Communist Party, the interests of Russia are not considered so clearly as they were by Lenin, but nevertheless Russia has been making constant economic progress.

In the literature of this new Russia the names of Maiakovsky and Blok are important. Maiakovsky wished to break entirely with the literature of the past. He is a politician, and politics makes up the bulk of his writing. "His poetry is intended for the street and the mob, coarse, quite foreign to refinement and despising gracefulness, a loud and primitive drum."** There are poets appearing from the ranks of the peasants, giving promise of a rich contribution to Russia's literature.

L.Leonov, a young writer who is showing unusual promise, has the gift of writing short stories which promise to make him known outside of Russia. His novel "The Badgers" is a tale of the peasant revolt against the Bolsheviki. "The cheerful and assured tone of his novel conveys the mood

*Walter Duranty, in "Current History", November, 1927

**Marc Slonim, Current History, November, 1927

of that great multitude of peasants who believe in their strength and in their future.....It maintains throughout a strong and cheerful tone, the tone of all recent literary production. It would be futile to look for the messianism or mysticism of the first period of the Revolution or for the dreaminess of pre-war Russian prose, for what we find is virility, a tendency to look at actual life earnestly and frankly, a renunciation of illusions and a striving to create which is felt by the whole of young Russia. In this respect Russian literature, as it has often done before, may now be forcasting the freedom which does not exist under present political conditions. At the same time the sanity and strength in the new literature are not only a guarantee of the future cultural development but of Russia itself. The progress of Russian art and science in the terrible years of revolution indicates the enormous vitality of the Russian nation and gives rise to hope for a happy solution of the present crisis, justifying at the same time the words which fifty years ago were uttered by Turgenev, with regard to the progress of Russian literature: "It cannot be that such a language was not given to a great people."*

The Russian governmental experiments, Russian literature, and the Russian people themselves present interesting studies when compared with other nationalities.

*Marc Slonim in Current History, November, 1927

The Russian as an individual compares favorably with other peoples, and his achievement in art, music, and drama is unique. In the field of the novel and short story he is a dictator.

An analysis of the English and Russian story would emphasize anew the fact that the national life colors and shapes the literary life of a people.

Perhaps no civilization seems so poised, so serene, when contrasted with Russia's stormy existence, as that of England. Certainly she has had her internal and external strife, but she has always boasted an established order that Russia has never known. This serenity finds expression in the literature of England.

Rudyard Kipling, a representative English short story writer, possesses, regardless of the fact that he lived and wrote for years in India, the traits of a conventional Englishman. Even the animals in his jungle have an English out-look on life. "His noblest beasts are models of English efficiency." William Lyon Phelps has said, "I wonder what Kipling thinks of the men and women in Dostoevsky's novels." Certainly these neurotic creatures would not appeal to a man of power. For Kipling is a master of events, kindly, strong, never rebellious, dignified, sincere and able to laugh. He is a journalist, possessing keen imagination and a capacity for romance. "Without Benefit of Clergy" is a beautiful story, touching deep

places, but in it there is a sort of pleasurable pain, a sweet sadness. After little Tota's death, Ameera and Holden, sitting on the roof, with the southern night sky above them, are drawn close by their loss. "We be two who were three. The greater need therefore that we be one." The picture is sad, but never tragic. Ameera's death is only sorrowful. Kipling mourns in long graceful sentences, never in the staccato cry of anguish. "Ameera's mother sat spinning in the lower veranda, and the wooden gate was shut and barred. The music of a marriage procession came to the roof above the gentle hum of the city, and a string of flying-foxes crossed the face of the low moon."

English sadness, the sadness of George Eliot, becomes a "rollicking comedy compared with the awful shadow cast by the literature of the Slavs".*

The French novel and story have long held a place of security and respect in Russia, and the influence of French writers can be traced clearly in Russian literature. But there is a vast difference between the Russians and the French, a striking difference in temperament that goes far toward explaining their literature. The Russians are deadly serious, the Parisians are deadly gay! The Frenchman disposes of literature that is poisonous, suggestive, and demoralizing with a shrug of his shoulders. But the Russian takes it seriously, and his passionate, impulsive

* Essays on Russian Novelists, William Lyon Phelps, P.30

temperament reacts dangerously. Doubtless the careless dissemination of French novels, of the worst type, among the youthful reading public of Russia did much to make Russian aristocratic society "the most corrupt in the world."

Critics, among them Tolstoy, have often compared Chekhov to the French master, Guy de Maupassant. But the resemblance is hard to find. deMaupassant holds a supreme position as a short story writer; so does Chekhov. But "the chill wind that blows from the atmosphere created by the Frenchman's objective artistry is by the Russian co-mingled with the warm breath of a great human sympathy." deMaupassant never tells where his sympathies lie, and you do not know. You only guess. Neither does Chekhov tell you where his sympathies lie, but you know without guessing. Chekhov is as objective in his art as is de Maupassant. He never obtrudes his personality but you know that he is always present, always at hand. It is a delicate and subtle art by which he makes one feel that nearness of himself. For all his objectiveness he defies cold analysis.

"Two Little Soldiers" by de Maupassant, suggests the simplicity of Chekhov's style and the deftness of his touch. But in such stories as "The False Gems" and "Mademoiselle Fifi", one discovers the objective quality

most typical of de Maupassant. His is a superb technique, proving him a finished artist. But sometimes one sees the trick of the trade in his art. The Russians know no tricks.

The French are clever, where the Russian stumbles clumsily. But the Slav takes to his task of creation a spirit that ennobles his effort. "Before the supreme function of literature, the Russian writer stands awed and humbled. He knows he cannot cover up poverty of thought, poverty of spirit and lack of sincerity by rhetorical tricks and verbal cleverness." The Russians have a cosmopolitan character. They are not concerned over little things. They are not prejudiced.

Then, too, the French are a romantic people with a romance that often runs into sentimentality. They weep, either from joy or grief, too easily. Not so the Russian. His misery goes below the depth of tears, his joy soars above the gift of tears. The truly Russian writer is never just a romanticist. Life is too real for him.

The French writer is concerned chiefly with situations, the Russian with character, and as easily as the Frenchman reels off plot, the Russian unfolds character. The best writers of Russia concerned themselves chiefly with one class, the one they knew best; Tolstoi writing of the peasants, Gorki of the out-cast of the streets, Kuprin of the soldiers. There is unconscious movement of character

through the situations. While in the hands of the French writer the characters move with spontaneity, grace, and alertness, there is sometimes a consciousness of the mechanics of the movement. The music of the situation marks the time for the characters. In Russian fiction the characters move in rhythm to the melody of Life, a melody almost always played in a minor key. No one directs the prose symphony of Russian literature unless it be the shadowy conductor called Fate.

The national tone of the Russian short story makes it distinctly a thing apart. Because the element of horror occupies such a prominent place in their literary work, it has been suggested that the Russians are much like the American horror-specialist, Edgar Allan Poe. It is quite possible that the Russians resemble the real Poe much more than Poe the master of form. For we must remember that by nature Poe was a poet. "Literature to him was poetry, and poetry was not a pursuit but a passion." However, the material man had to live, and because poetry writing was not a profitable business, Poe turned to prose for his bread and salt. The Hoffmann type of story was popular and Poe followed the lead of public taste. He studied the French and the German types, taking the same material that Hoffmann treated with "lawless creative genius" and developing it with a deliberate art

that in its field, is well-nigh perfect. But Poe was a scientist, not a romanticist. He worked coldly for effect, using novelty, variety, rule and reason, but no passion. He wrote to create an impression. His characters are neither real nor true. They only serve his purpose. Contrast the cold analysis of such a story as "Ligeia" with Andreev's "Lazarus" and you find the essential difference between two writers who seem, on the surface, to have many points in common.

The Russians are not conscious of their art as such. To them truth is art, and truth alone. Out of the fullness of their hearts their mouths speak. No so with Poe! Out of the cleverness of his brain he wrought. As a creator of atmosphere Poe is a master, but we are conscious of his creating hand. With the Russians the atmosphere is there; they only reproduce it. They do not strive consciously to give an effect of horror, as did Poe in"Brenice".

Then too, Poe's people do not talk as real people. They are creatures under the keen scrutiny of his scientific eye, artificial puppets, marching with precision and excellent form.

If Andreev had possessed the studied technique of Poe he might have built more dramatically, more skillfully. But on the other hand he might, in the study of form, have lost something of the depth and power of his creative genius.

Poe, the master of short story form, gave to it no spirit. Writing in a country that was new, vital, charged with possibilities, he gave to the world nothing that was American, nothing national. How different are the Russians. Every line of their stories is Russian, every character and setting, all the philosophy and atmosphere. Gogol, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Dostoevsky, Kuprin, Gorki, Andreev, all have written Russian history, social and political, for they have written from the hearts of their countrymen. They have starved in prisons because they wrote the truth, because they dared to expose a decayed social system to the eyes of the world. How small appears Poe's incentive; he who coldly, in hope of financial success, wrote of the mechanics of horror, the clap-trap, outward semblances, but missed the spirit entirely. Great in "constructive art" he falls far below Andreev in his "passion for abstract thought", for Andreev is a psychologist, a realist, and a poet. He knew no artificial methods.

If Poe the poet had not been sacrificed to Poe the technician, the short story would have lost its master craftsman, but Poe might be a name as dear to the American heart as Gogol is dear to the Russian.

The self-assertive quality that is so typical of Americans makes it difficult for them to understand the sensitiveness and humility of the Russian temperament.

To them it appears as "a paralysis of the power of will". The Russians are subjective where American writers are objective. "A Russian author is more ardently devoted to a cause than an American short story writer to a plot". The Russians take literature perhaps more seriously than any other nation. They do not write to live, they live to write!

"Russian literature and American literature are twins, for although Russian history goes back to the ninth century her literature as far as it interests the world, begins in the nineteenth. But American literature sounds, in its early years, like a child learning to talk and then aping its elders; Russian literature is the voice of a giant, waking from a long sleep, and becoming articulate. It is as though the world had watched this giant's deep slumber for a long time wondering what he would say when he awakened. And what he said has been well worth the thousand years of waiting."*

William Lyon Phelps said in 1917, "Partly owing to the war, partly owing to the reaction that follows a surprise, there is some danger that the former Anglo-Saxon indifference to Russian fiction will change into an almost equally stupid idolatry. A novel, or story, is not great simply because it is written in the Russian language, nor because its author has a name difficult to pronounce.

*Essays on Russian Novelists, William Lyon Phelps, p.2

A slavish adoration of Russian writing is not in itself an indication of critical intelligence. The greatest of Russian fiction is great not because it is superhuman, or inhuman, but because it is poignantly human.

"The modern Russian writers can be just as sensational, just as cheap, just as dull as if they had been born in America. It should be the task of the translators not to hurry anything and everything Russian through the press, but to exercise the happy talent of selection and discrimination. Nor should there be any exploiting of mere horror or sensuality. A pessimist is not necessarily a profound thinker, nor is uncleanness in itself a sign of virility. Emerson and Browning had at once more depth and force than Artsybashev."

Any criticism of Russian literature is in danger of being superficial. We must know the depths from which he wrote if Gorki's "Lower Depths" does not disgust us. Viewed in the cold light of analysis, without its natural background of truth, it is a sordid thing. But with a knowledge of the author, his country and his time it becomes a revelation.

If"beauty is truth, truth beauty", then much of the ugliness and horror of Russian fiction is illuminated by the white light of that beauty. After a performance of Ibsen's "Ghosts" the early plays of Sir Arthur W. Pinero are flat. Just as Ibsen set a new standard of truth for

drama, so the Slavs have, by their honesty, shamed the vapid triflers-with-truth who write stories for some of our current magazines. Russian literary art is never content with half-truths or external aspects of life only. The artist feels it his duty to see for and beyond the average mind. He believes that "truth in art is the unity of a thing with itself--the outward rendered expressive of the inward; the soul made incarnate; the body instinct with spirit."* The Russians are realists who seek reality.

These writers, whether the great masters or their disciples, have been sincere in their treatment of humankind. Their people are not just personalities, but are lasting and enduring types. They used discrimination and selection in the choosing of their characters, but always "behind the individual man is humanity and the vision of humanity".** They not only observe life, they seek to value it also. If they sometimes fall into naturalism and fail to observe that "reality is not a matter of facts, but a matter of artistic conception";*** we can forgive them because of the earnestness of their purpose.

As their gift to the constructive literary life of today we may class as highest, even beyond their splendid naturalness, the glorified vision of art which the Russians, more than any other nationality, have conceived and fostered.

* Modern Drama in Europe, Storm Jameson

** Modern Drama in Europe, Jameson, p.250

***Modern Drama in Europe, Jameson, p.246.

In their literature, their theatres, their music, art is the ennobler of life. Life itself may be mean and crippled and warped, but art can transcend, beautify through truth. When the art is never higher than the materials with which it works, the result is a poor-spirited, unreal travesty of humanity. An idealist who is not an artist may see the vision, but it requires the artistic execution of a Chekhov to lift what was purely Russian to what was truly Russian.

But we find their greatest constructive weakness in the limitations of the creative artist to believe and to have faith.

Nietzsche, holding his place as poet and reformer, rather than as a constructive philosopher, stimulated to expression in Ibsen and Strindberg a quality which the Russians had as a national and temperamental heritage; a spirit of revolt against smugness, against limitations, ugliness and sloth; a desire for truth, though that truth crush with its weight the soul that sought for it.

But with the disciples of Nietzsche self conquered. Life, fate, destiny moved aside when the revolting, waring self, made attack. This barbaric cry of the superman, proceeding from a German soul, had in it the lusty vigor, the self-assertiveness of that nation. The same cry of revolt was heard in Russia, but it died out in a wail of

hopelessness, of defeat. Either it was a weak thing born of a doomed-to-despair people, or it saw more clearly than did the short-sighted German the inevitability of man's defeat in a battle with Fate. The Russians admitted a power stronger than self, and bowed too readily to it. Nietsche neither recognized nor bowed.

One of the great needs of the Russian literary world is a super-abundant vitality; artistic vitality that can save as well as solve! Too often distrust of life throttles their creative spirit and the vision which gave them courage at the start, fades and grows dim. Another imperative need of Russia is peace--economic, social and political peace out of which her writers may speak of the past, and of their visions of the future, and be heard.

Suffering has always been the corner-stone of Russian literature, as it is of Russian life. "Suffering is the heritage of their race"; However, through all their stormy history they have preserved a remarkably distinct national character, and it is this solidarity, this strong sense of unity, that gives promise of a great future for the Russian People.

Nadson, in 1883 expressed this hope for his beloved country:

> "My friend, my brother, weary, suffering brother,
> Whoever thou may'st be, let not thy spirit fail;
> Let evil and injustice reign with sway supreme
> O'er all the tear--washed earth.
> Let the sacred ideal be shattered and dishonored;
> Let innocent blood flow in stream--
> Believe me, there cometh a time when Baal shall perish,
> And love shall return to earth."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andreev,--The Red Laugh, (Translated by A. Linden); T. Fisher Union, London.

Andreev,--The Shield; Alfred Knopf, 1917.

Baring, Maurice,--The Russian People; Methuen and Company, London, 1911.

Beazley, Forbes and Birkett,--Russia from the Varangians to the Bolsheviks, (Introduction by Ernest Barker); Oxford University Press, 1918.

Bruckner, Anton,--A Literary History of Russia, (Translated by H. Havelock); Scribners, 1908.

Elnett, Elaine,--Family Life in Russia; Columbia University Press, 1926.

Fanning, C. E.,--Selected Articles on Russia; W. H. Wilson Company, 1918.

Fox, Ralph,--People of the Steppes; Houghton Mifflin, 1925.

Gorki, Maxim,--The Shield; Alfred Knopf, 1917.

Gorki, Maxim,--Submerged, (Translated by E. Hopkins); Richard Badger, 1915.

Graham, Stephen,--Russia in 1916; Macmillan Company, 1917.

Hapgood, E.,--A Survey of Russian Literature; The Chautauqua Press, 1902.

Huneker, James Gibbons,--Iconoclasts; Scribners, 1914.

Jameson, Storm,--Modern Drama in Europe; Harcourt, Brace, 1920.

Karamsin,--Tales from the Russian; G. Sidney, London, 1804.

Klabund,--Peter the Czar; Putnams, 1925.

Kornilov,--Modern Russian History, Vols. I and II, (Translated by Alexander Kaun); Alfred Knopf, 1916.

Koteliansky, S. S. and Tomlinson,--The Life and Letters of Anton Tchekhov, (Biography by Zamyatin); Cassell, London, 1925.

Krasnov, Peter,--From The Two-Headed Eagle To The Red Flag, Four volumes, (Translated by E. Couriss); Brentanos, 1923.

Kropotkin,--Ideals and Realities in Russian Literature; McClure, Phillips and Company, 1905.

Kuprin, Alexander,--A Bracelet of Garnets; Scribners, 1917.

Lyeskov, Nicolai,--The Cathedral Folk, (Translated by Hapgood); Alfred Knopf, 1924.

Mirsky, D. S.,--Contemporary Russian Literature; Alfred Knopf, 1926.

Morfill,--Slavonic Literature, (Chapters III and IV); E. and J. B. Young and Company.

Olgin, M. J.,--Russian Literature; Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920.

Olgin, M. J.,--The Soul of the Russian Revolution, (Introduction by V. Semkhovitch); Henry Holt and Company, 1917.

Pares, Sir Bernard,--A History of Russia; Alfred Knopf, 1926.

Pares, Sir Bernard,--Russia and Reform; Constable and Company, London, 1907.

Phelps, William Lyon,--Essays on Russian Novelists; Macmillan Company, 1916.

Pobyedonostsev,--Reflections of a Russian Statesman, (Translated by Robert C. Long); Richards, London, 1898.

Pushkin,--Prose Tales, (Translated by Keane); Bell and Sons, London, 1916.

Sayler, Oliver M, Editor,--Moscow Art Theatre Series of Russian Plays; Brentanos, 1922.

Sayler, Oliver M.,--The Russian Theatre; Brentanos, 1922.

Seltzer, Thomas,--Editor of Best Russian Short Stories; Boni and Liveright, 1917.

Shakhnovski,--A Short History of Russian Literature, (Translated by Serge Tomkeyeff); E. P. Dutton and Company, 1921.

Shedden,--Russian Folk Tales.

Sologub, Feodor,--The Old House

Sologub, Feodor,--The Shield; Alfred Knopf, 1917.

Souiny-Seydlitz, Baroness,--Russia of Yesterday and Tomorrow; Century Company, 1917

Tchekhov, Anton,--Stories of Russian Life; Duckworth and Company, London, 1915.

Tchekhov, Anton,--Love and Other Stories, (Translated by C. Garnett); Macmillan Company, 1923.

Tchekhov, Anton,--The Darling and Other Stories; Macmillan and Company.

Tchekhov, Anton,--Nine Humorous Tales; Stratford Company, 1918.

Tchekhov, Anton,--Plays, (Introduction by West), Series I and II; Scribner's, 1912,1916.

Tolstoy,--Redemption; Boni and Liveright, 1919.

Tolstoy,--The Power of Darkness; Boni and Liberight, 1919.

Turner, Charles Edward,--Studies in Russian Literature; Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1882.

Turgenev,--A Lear of the Steppe, (Translated by Hapgood); Scribner's, 1903.

Turgenev,--Fathers and Sons; Boni and Liveright.

Turgenev,--Torrents of Spring; Boni and Liveright.

Waliszewski,--Russian Literature, (Edited by Edmund Gosse); William Hineman, London, MDCCCC.

Wiener, Leo,--Anthology of Modern Slavonic Literature, (Translated by P. Selver); E. P. Dutton, 1919.

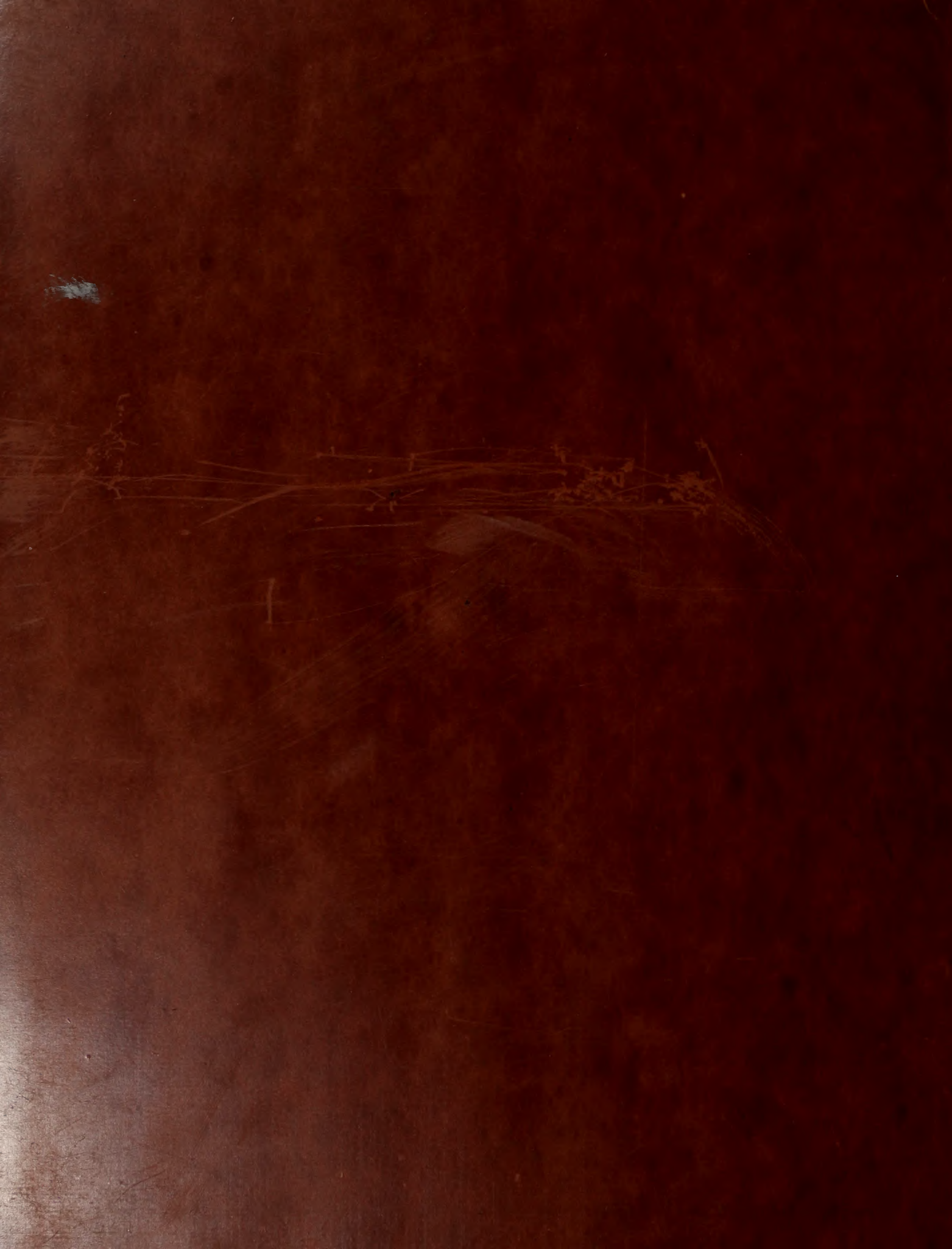
Wiener, Leo,--Anthology of Russian Literature, Vols. I and II; Putnam's Sons, 1902,1903.

Wiener, Leo,--Contemporary Drama of Russia; Little, Brown and Company, 1924.

Yarmolinsky, Abrahm,--Turgenev - The Man - His Art - And His Age; Century Company, 1926.

Date Due

Demco 293-5			

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
1 1719 02487 5728

ACCOPRESS BINDER
BF 250-P7 EMB
MADE BY
ACCO PRODUCTS, INC.
OGDENSBURG, N. Y.